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The Wronged Bride

-:- Or -:-

Truth at Last

By Jeannette King

CHAPTER I.

THERE was a step on the stair, and then a succession of taps on the door at the end of the second-floor hall, while a voice called: "Miss Carr! Beverly! There's a man waiting for you downstairs."

There was no response to the quick, shrill call that penetrated the darkness of the hallway, and the quiet of mid-afternoon. The woman turned the handle of the door, and walked into the narrow room, but its occupant was not there.

"Now, where can that child be?" she asked aloud.

Then it suddenly dawned upon her that the girl was out-of-doors in the garden that extended from the back of the house to the road that lay some ten or fifteen feet behind it. She peered out of the window, but there was no sign of Beverly. She called again, but only the singing of birds and the hum of insects in the lazy air greeted her ears. She waited for a moment or two. At last, from the distance, she heard a sweet voice that seemed to tremble with the weight of its own music.

"I am coming, Mrs. Holmes," it called.

It did not take long before the girl stood in the doorway. Beverly Carr made a pretty picture as she stood there, flushed and panting, after her run thru the garden; tall and fair, with the flush of a wild rose on her cheeks, she was indeed a beauty. Her golden hair lay in ripples over her brow, and shaded the violet eyes that gazed out on the world from beneath the shadow of heavy lashes.

"You wanted me?" she asked. "It was so beautiful out in the garden," she added, as if sorry to have been called away.

"My dear," said Mrs. Holmes, half out of patience, "if you would only put that nonsense out of your head, and think seriously of what lies before you."

"Is it that bad?" asked the girl, laughingly.

"There's a man downstairs in the parlor," Mrs. Holmes went on. "Your guardian, I believe he said. You were expecting him?"

"Oh, has he come? I'm so glad."

"Straighten your hair, dear," said the older woman, as Beverly advanced towards the stairway. "I am sure he would not like to see you, this way."

She brushed back the girl's golden hair with her hand, her fingers lovingly

on its fine-spun surface. Then she bent over swiftly and kissed her.

"Don't be frightened, child," she added. "He seems hard and stern, but I am sure he is kind and good. Now, go. He is in the parlor."

The parlor, in the Holmes household, was a place to be treated with the greatest respect, being the only dull, formal room in the whole house, and reserved especially for state occasions. As Beverly entered it, she noted at a glance that the room and its occupant were entirely suited to each other in tone and appearance; but this fact did not daunt her. She went forward, with outstretched hand, her face covered with blushes and sweet with smiles.

"I'm glad to see you, Mr. Lawson," she said simply. "Father spoke of you often before he died."

The man she addressed looked at her awkwardly enough; he did not know what to do with the little white hand that rested so softly within his own.

"Y-your father said you were a child," he blurted out, at last. "I did not know. You——"

He stopped short in confusion. John Lawson had not dreamed that his ward was a young lady. From the father's letters, he had pictured a little girl, with hair hanging down her back in pigtails, one still engrossed with her schoolbooks. Instead, he found a woman, a beautiful creature, with a face like a flower and hair like gold.

"Have you traveled far?" she asked, at length, with the idea that she ought to show him some hospitality.

"From my home in Galena," he answered, with a frozen smile. "I have been gone since morning."

"You would like something to eat and drink, then," she said, smiling.

"It would be acceptable. I have not taken food since I left home, this morning."

Beverly hastened in search of some refreshment; her guardian followed her movements with a strange expression.

"Great Heavens!" he thought. "What will mother say? What shall I do?"

In a few moments she returned, and spread a dainty tea-table. He watched her as she busied herself with the food and poured him some tea, which she gave him in one of the delicate cups that adorned the table.

"You are like a sunbeam," he said suddenly. "The room brightened when you came into it."

"I'm afraid Mrs. Holmes is just a bit tired of my gayety," she answered, half-sadly. Then, pausing for a moment, she asked, "What are you going to do with me? Am I to stay here, or are you going to take me with you?"

Lawson was somewhat taken back with the unexpected theory. "I scarcely know yet," he answered. "I [illegible] you were seven or eight [illegible] mother is [illegible] fond of young people. At least," he hastened to add, "I think not. But we can arrange that."

There was no more said of the future during the next few days of his stay, and the girl had no premonition of what it held in store for her. She trusted this man, whom her father had looked upon as a friend. In spite of the dullness of his speech and the hardness of his features, she placed the greatest confidence in him. She realized that her life was in his keeping, nor did she shrink from this idea. He was different from her father, far different, but she trusted him, and that was the most essential part in the relationship between them.

Little did she think that, when next she saw him, life would have changed itself into a complex thing. They were sitting together on the vine-covered porch, a week after his arrival at the house. The sun was shedding its last rays over the summer landscape, flooding it with a golden light, and tingeing it with red. Everything around about seemed to glow with life, under its magic touch.

Even the rugged features of the man were mellowed by its light, the hard lines eradicated, the profile softened. The silence between them was almost companionable. At last he began to speak. His voice seemed far off and unnatural to the girl.

"Beverly," he said, clearing his throat and attempting to speak his words easily, "I've been thinking since I came here that our plans must be changed."

"Then you're not going to take me with you?" she asked fearfully.

"Yes," he said, "but only on one condition, and that is that you become my wife."

It was over now, and Lawson breathed more easily.

"Your wife?" she echoed.

"Yes. Does that seem so awful to you?"

"It isn't that," she hastened to reply, "but I never thought of you, or any other man, in that light. I am only 18," she went on, piteously. "I—I scarcely know what to do."

"You are not too young to think of marriage, now," he told her gravely. "You are a woman. If your father were living now, I am sure that he would approve of it very much. My dear, I love you."

She looked at him, startled.

"Love me?" she repeated. "But you have only known me one short week."

"Who could help loving you?" he asked.

"Do you really think my father would like it?" she asked, looking up in his eyes.

"I am sure he would, Beverly; he would like it better than any other arrangement that could possibly be made."

John Lawson was not rejected. Urged on by Mrs. Holmes, who regarded the marriage as a Godsend to the girl, and by the importunate man, as well, Beverly consented, and they were married.

It was July; the morning broke with golden brightness, and the birds sang gayly in the trees and bushes, but in Beverly's heart there was no answering song, only fear, and unutterable dread.

"I'm so frightened," she gasped, when Mrs. Holmes and a neighbor came to dress her.

"It's no wonder," said the younger woman, as she turned to Mrs. Holmes. "Marriage is a solemn affair."

But the forebodings that the girl felt in her heart soon passed away, as she saw her reflection in a glass, and noted the long sweep of the wedding dress and the veil that hung far down over her shoulders. The child nature in her became paramount, the color came back to her face, and the smile to her lips.

The clergyman that married them looked not without wonder at the pair he was to wed. Still, it was no business of his; the matter was perfectly legal. Then he opened his book. In less than ten minutes he had made them man and wife.

CHAPTER II.

AS THE train sped thru the green country and neared Galena, Beverly busied herself with dreaming of what she would do, once she had reached her new home. She felt a great pride in it, a sense of proprietorship that she had never known before. She thought of the changes she would make, and the whims and fancies that she would indulge in the arrangement of her own room. In her trunk she had many treasures—books and pictures that her father had given her, and tiny statuettes that she meant to place all around.

She remembered a room that she had seen, when her father had taken her to visit a relative in a distant city, all in yellow and white, with great willow baskets of flowers standing about, and gilt cages for the birds. It was a pleasant picture, and as the details of it grew complete, she smiled brightly.

Her husband noted it immediately. "What is it, dear?" he asked, struck by the unusual brightness of her face.

"I was thinking of our home," she responded, "and I feel sure that we will be happy there."

John Lawson showed his pleasure. The drive from the station, however, was made in silence. Already the man was beginning to dread the potent influence [illegible] passed thru the [illegible] fields, and saw, [illegible] distance, the neat outhouses and [illegible]. At last the road turned, and they came suddenly upon a red brick structure that stood uncompromisingly in a patch of ground devoted to some scraggly currant bushes. There was not a tree nor a flower to be seen anywhere.

"That is your home," John Lawson said, as he helped her out of the buggy and led her toward the house.

The interior was as cheerless and dull as one glance at the outside had promised. In a room that abutted the hall, and opened off of it, sat a tall, angular woman, whose height had been weighed down with the burden of years. Age had not softened her features, nor erased the hard lines about her mouth.

"So this is your wife, John?" she said, as she arose from her seat by the fireplace, and advanced toward the couple. "Hm!"

There was silence for some moments after this sally. Instinctively, Beverly knew that this woman was her enemy, the most vital force that she would have to combat in her married life.

"Is supper ready yet?" asked John, glad of anything as an excuse to break the stillness.

"No," said his mother, shortly. "It won't be ready for another hour. Do you think your wife would like a cup of tea?" she asked grudgingly.

"No, thank you," Beverly hastened to respond. "I can wait. Don't trouble yourself."

"As you wish, Mrs. Lawson," said the older woman, smiling grimly.

The oppressive silence which seemed interminable fell over them again. On the mantelpiece, between the tall glass vases filled with river reeds, the clock ticked ceaselessly. Not a breath of air stirred the curtains at the windows, and the old horsehair furniture reeked with the accumulated dust of years.

"What a horrible place!" thought Beverly. "I shall change it as soon as I can."

She was meditating on the alterations she would make, when the older woman's voice dispelled her illusions.

"The place doesn't come up to your expectations, eh?" she asked sharply. Then, in a lower tone, which she pretended was not to reach the girl's ears, "Too fine a lady. I told John no good would come of bringing her here."

Beverly was too humiliated to answer. Instead, she sat quietly in her chair, and let the woman's sneering remark go without comment. She felt the helplessness of her position. If she had only never come here! Then she thought of John, and his grim, hard face. Merciful Heavens! Had she been blind? Unconsciously she heaved a sigh; it only succeeded in irritating the old woman more.

"Well, why don't you answer me?" she demanded. "Ain't I worth an answer?"

"I beg your pardon," the girl hastened to reply. "I scarcely heard you. Everything is so new and strange to me—you understand, don't you?"

Try as she would, the tears welled in her eyes. Vaguely, she wondered why John, who had left the room some time before, did not come back. At last she heard his footstep in the outer hall.

"Supper is ready," he said perfunctorily. "Come on, Beverly."

He led the way to the rear of the house, supporting his mother as they passed thru the long, dark hallway, while his wife followed close behind. The meal itself dragged on interminably. Beverly scarcely ate at all, watching her husband furtively as he devoured great mouthfuls of food.

"Why don't you eat?" he asked at length.

"The food's not to her liking, I suppose," his mother responded, before the girl had a chance to answer.

Beverly's eyes filled with tears. "I'm tired," she said, struggling to control her voice. "Won't you show me where my room is?" She pushed back the plate that stood before her, and arose.

Her husband looked at her curiously. "As you please," he answered, not a little coldness creeping into his voice. Without another word, he led the way upstairs, and showed her her room.

"Good night," he said, as he left her at the door. He turned on his heel and disappeared in the darkness. The girl listened to the thumping of his footsteps, and then went into her room.

What a homecoming it was! She tried to smile bravely at her reflection in the tiny mirror that hung over the bureau, but the hot tears persisted in coursing down her cheeks, and at last she abandoned herself to them. She was miserable, utterly wretched and miserable. Nothing mattered in the whole world. Why hadn't she died before she came here? [illegible] She threw herself on the bed and sobbed out her bitterness. It was early morning when she awoke; the east was already streaked with faint touches of yellow and red, heralds of the morning. In the yard below she heard the first stirrings of life. She shuddered; another day like the one that had just preceded it. Then she thought of the days that were to follow one another in infinite number. A thousand times she wished herself back with Mrs. Holmes. Why had she ever taken this step?

But Beverly was young, and youth recuperates and forgets quickly. She spent the morning wandering over the farm with her husband. Efficiency was manifest in every corner of it; not one inch of space was wasted. Spots of land that other men would have left untouched were utilized. She looked up at him in wonder.

"And did you really do all this yourself?" she asked in wonder.

"Yes, and why not?" Pride and ill-concealed delight were in the words.

"Do you like it?" she asked.

"Like it?" John Lawson laughed. "Why, of course, I like it."

"But there is not a tree or a flower on the whole place." She looked around as she spoke.

"No; they do not bring money, like corn and vegetables. They are of no use. Why should I have them?"

"Promise me," she said impulsively, looking up in his face, "that you will give me a little plot of ground, so that I may raise a few flowers for myself. Will you?"

He hesitated for a moment. Then, looking at her upturned face, he could not refuse; inwardly, he was thinking of what his mother would say if she had heard the strange request.

During the two months that followed, the girl busied herself with the flowers that she loved. But at last the raw winds of autumn blew over the fields, and she knew that the one pleasure of her life on the farm would be a thing of the past. She dreaded the thought of the long hours she would have to spend indoors with the old woman, whom she was coming to regard as her worst enemy. It depressed her spirits and weighed her down with despair.

The thought of the boxes that she had brought with her dispelled her fears momentarily. She longed to see the books and pictures that it had taken her father so long to gather; she would have a room to put them in, a room that was exclusively hers, in which she could do just as she pleased. She determined to speak to her husband about it before dinner. Beverly found him some distance from the barns, looking over the fields that had already been stripped of their produce. She watched him for a few seconds before she spoke.

"John," she said softly, "I have a great favor to ask of you."

The man smiled down at her; never, he thought, had he seen any one so beautiful as his young wife. In his ecstasy, he forgot that she had asked something of him, and he bent over swiftly and kissed her.

"And may I have it, John?" she asked gleefully.

"What is it, my dear?"

"I want a room, one of my very own, where I can do as I please, and keep all the pretty things that my father gave me before he died." Her face clouded a moment, as she thought of her father, lying far away, in the little cemetery.

"Surely, my dear. We will talk to mother about it, at dinner time."

The girl's heart sank. Supposing the old woman would refuse to grant her request? Her husband must have read something of her thoughts on her face, for he immediately added:

"Mother will give you the room, I'm positive. Then you can do just as you want."

"And may I furnish it with pretty dress and lace curtains at the windows, and have a big easy chair, covered with chintz, in one corner, and a table for my embroidery?"

"Yes, certainly; it will be your room. Nobody will have the right to say what you shall do there."

But even this simple request met with opposition. John's mother checked her, inch by inch. She fought her way, at every step, until in the exhaustion of fighting what she knew was a [illegible] battle, her interest in the room [illegible]

"What does it matter?" she asked herself. "Nobody cares—not John, mother, and I, least of all. I can [illegible] without it."

Like all the farmhouse settled into its accustomed hard and [illegible] grooves. The winter came on; one day after the other passed in endless procession, each an exact replica of the one that preceded it.

For weeks after she had been confined to the house, she had felt a dizziness and depression coming over her, but she did not complain. It was indeed useless, she told herself, and so she had borne it without a word. One day after the other she sat in the dingy sitting-room, gazing listlessly over the bleak fields, covered with snow, and the long, impassable roads. Spring and summer would come again, she knew, but for her it did not matter. In her heart there would always be winter—dead, dreary days succeeding nights that were even more lifeless.

The apathy that had come over her was unnatural; all the interest had gone out of life, and only the hard dry culls remained. Every day something more went out of her life, and left her more hopeless than she had been the day before. In the mornings it was a task to dress herself, and to face the long, bitter trial before her.

One morning, in particular, the feeling so overcame her that she could not arise. As she lay with her face toward the wall, and reviewed the time since she had been married, the handle of the door turned abruptly, and a sharp voice demanded:

"Did you think we were going to carry your breakfast up to you, Mrs. Lawson?"

Beverly turned and faced her husband's mother.

"I'll all right," she said meekly. "I'll be up directly. It does not matter."

"A farmer's wife has no business pampering herself," her mother-in-law said scornfully.

Slowly the girl followed the older woman to the kitchen, where her husband was already busily engaged in eating his breakfast. He did not glance up as she entered, but grunted his greeting to her from across the table. Nobody spoke; Beverly walked to the other side of the room, and brought a chair from the corner to place at the table, but before she had covered half the distance she fell, clinging to the chair.

"What is it?" Lawson asked in alarm, as he bent over the prostrate form of his wife.

"It's nothing. Your wife has fainted," his mother answered sneeringly. But try as they would, they could not induce her to open her eyes.

"Send for the doctor," he said shortly.

"There's no necessity; she'll be all right."

"Send for him!" he demanded passion-

BE SURE and read "THE WRONGED BRIDE; or, TRUTH AT LAST," in this issue. Next week's leader will be another thrilling story about the "Great Ruby of Roo" by Will Gage Carey. It is entitled, "INTO THE UNKNOWN; or, RAJAH AND RUBY." Read it. Don't quit taking the Ledger during the summer, if you do you will miss a lot of mighty good things. We have them and are going to print them. Sit tight and see.

ately, for once not heeding his mother's words.

When the kindly old doctor came, he glanced about the rooms.

"Open the windows," he requested, and altho Lawson's mother did not wish to carry out his orders, something in his demeanor told her that it was not good to trifle with this man. Reluctantly she obeyed.

The breath of fresh, cool air that swept thru the rooms refreshed Beverly. Wearily she opened her eyes and saw the doctor and her husband bending over her.

"Where am I?" she asked softly, but the doctor cautioned against further speech.

"You will be all right," he added, "only now, you must rest, and I'll tell you a wonderful secret. Perhaps you have already guessed what it is?" The old man smiled down at her, and she nodded slightly to tell him that she understood.

"Now take care of yourself, and for the child's sake, keep well and strong."

"I will try," she answered, as she bade the doctor good day.

In the early summer, when all nature was in bloom once more, they placed a lovely boy in Beverly's arms, and she asked if he might not bear her dead father's name, Merideth.

The little one furnished the one spot of brightness in her life. With him she could give herself over to the joys and raptures that she felt. Many and many a time she took him away, stealthily, to her own room, where she might coo over him and play with him to her heart's content. But for the child she would have wished herself dead, a thousand times. Still, she knew the time was coming when she would have him no more. Little by little, John's mother encroached on her rights as the child's mother, and she resented the intrusion openly.

"You are taking him away from me," she protested. "I suppose some day I'll not even have the right to say what he is going to do."

"You are right," the older woman laughed disagreeably. "What do you know about bringing up a child, anyway?"

"Yes," put in John, gravely, "Mother is right. She is older than you, and she knows best. You should defer to her."

Beverly turned away in despair; it was useless to plead and argue. Once her husband had voiced a decision, she was powerless to resist his will. In her bitterness she became more apathetic than ever. Nothing mattered, nothing at all, only death; and she wished that it would soon overtake her and free her from all this.

She little dreamed how near she was to freedom that bright day in September, when the sun lay like a golden mist over the fields, and tinted and softened the landscape. She had literally stolen the baby from his crib, and had carried him into her own room, so that she might play with him as much as she pleased. As she brought him to the window and held him up to the light, she noticed with alarm the pallor of his skin and the heaviness about his eyes. Instead of crowing over the brightness without, he drooped his little head against her breast. Forgetting everything but the child, she burst into the room where John's mother was engaged in some sewing.

"The baby's ill," she managed to stammer.

"Give him to me," demanded the older woman harshly, "and don't stand there screaming like that. You frighten the baby." She took the infant from its mother's arms and bent over it. "Nonsense!" she continued. "There's nothing the matter with him. He's just teething."

At that moment John came into the room. One glance at his wife's face told him that something was wrong.

"What is it now?" he demanded impatiently.

"It's nothing," his mother hastened to assure him. "The baby's teething, and your wife has taken it into her head that he is dying."

"Leave the baby to mother," said John, as he advanced towards Beverly. "She will know what to do for him." Then he led her away from the spot where the older woman was standing with the child.

But the little one did not improve; in fact, he grew steadily worse. The young mother went into the kitchen and summoned the girl that had been hired during the busy harvest season.

"Mary," she said, "if you will go for the doctor I'll give you five dollars." The girl assented, and went to fetch the old physician.

At last the doctor came. When he saw the baby he shook his head gravely and turned toward the father.

"Why didn't you send for me before?" he demanded. "Perhaps, then, I might have been able to do something for the child."

"Won't the baby live?" asked John, hoarsely. Then, seeing the expression on the doctor's face, he buried his head in his arms, and his body shook with great sobs.

For a moment, after the young mother had learned the truth, she remained by the child's side, then blindly ran from the room. Everything was over for her now. Life held nothing more; its black desolate future stretched before her, beckoning her on, she knew not where. In a trance she found the old cloak and hat that she had worn when she first reached the farm. Mechanically she put these on, and made her way thru the house and out of the farmyard, without being noticed.

She was going away, as far away as the railroad would carry her. She walked thru the fields, until, in her wanderings, she reached a part of the country that was strange to her. All thru the day she walked about aimlessly, never seeming to near the town where she had intended to take the train. Night came on, and in her weariness she sank to the ground at the foot of a friendly tree. In the morning, when she awoke, she saw the spire of a church outlined against the ruddy sky, and she arose and hurried toward it. It betokened another village.

When she finally reached the station, she carefully took her purse from her pocket and counted the money that was in it. There was over a hundred dollars in bills and silver, and she took fifteen

"Good-by!"

dollars and passed it over the counter to the stationmaster.

"How far will this take me?" she asked.

"To Chicago," he answered, without so much as glancing at her.

"Very well. It does not matter where I go."

He gave her the ticket, and she sat down to rest and wait for the train to pull in. Bitter memories flooded over her. If they had only been kinder, she thought, perhaps then she would not have run away. As she boarded the train she looked back over the fields that she had crossed and bade them good-by. The train, in a few moments, would carry her far away and deposit her in a strange city. What its cavernous streets and dark buildings held for her, she did not know, nor did she care. It was enough for her that she would never see her husband or his mother again as long as she lived.

CHAPTER III.

THE noise and confusion in the dimly lighted station bewildered her; she did not know which way to turn to escape its harrowing noise and bustle.

"I beg your pardon, my dear," said a woman's voice, close to her elbow, "but are you waiting for some one to meet you?"

Beverly turned, and found herself face to face with a woman, whose matronly figure and soft blue eyes bespoke kindness and honesty. Here was a woman whom she could trust, and she did not hesitate to answer.

"Then perhaps you will go with me?" the woman asked.

With that, she told the girl who she was. As a representative of a large religious organization in the city, it was her duty to meet the incoming trains, and to take care of young women and girls who drifted into the city, and had no friends to whom they could turn.

The girl consented.

"Where is your baggage check?" asked the woman.

Beverly was at a loss. Suddenly, however, it dawned on her that she had come away without any clothing other than that which she was wearing.

"I haven't any," she said in embarrassment. "I came away without it."

The woman looked mystified, but said nothing. The distance between the station and the Association House was covered in silence. Neither of them spoke; the woman refrained from asking any questions, and her young companion was too bewildered by the traffic and the clatter of the big city to make any comments, even if her heart had not been heavy with the wrongs that she had suffered and the death that had robbed her of the only being that she loved.

Once inside the doorway that led off of the avenue, she found herself in a lobby that opened into a cozy living-room, that extended across the length of the building. She registered with the woman at the desk and went to her room. There she sank into a low rocker that stood near the window and gazed out over the lake. It lay before her, in all its dark beauty, with only the darting lights of an occasional boat, and the soft radiance of the moon playing on its surface.

Suddenly she realized that the past lay behind her, like some hideous dream that was already beginning to lose the glare of its hectic experiences. It did not seem to her that she was the same person who had gone from Mrs. Holmes' house to the parsonage with John Lawson, and who had spent a year of agony on the farm with him. Even the advent of the baby did not seem real. All that existed for her was the immediate present; the past was a dead shadow, and the future an unborn reality.

There was an air of detachment about it all. From the moment that she had given the woman in the office downstairs a fictitious name, it was as tho the slate had been wiped clean, and life had begun all over again. There was no past; the person whom she had called Beverly Carr, who had married John Lawson, had passed out of existence, and instead, there was another, Beverly Holmes, for whom life was beginning anew.

This new creature, Beverly Holmes, felt the need of employment, for without it she could not hope to live. It would be easy, she thought, to find something to do that would earn her an honest livelihood. But, poor girl, things did not turn out as she had hoped. Day after day she made her way from one shop to the other, from one factory door to the next, only to be greeted with the same response:

"Sorry, but times are poor, and we cannot take on any new help. Some other time, perhaps."

But she did not want work for the future. It was the present that was crying for something to clothe and feed it. Soon the fund that she had brought with her diminished to such an extent that she was forced to find cheaper lodgings. And so, with regret, she moved out into a sodden, dirty house, that stood a mile or so south of the Association House. From her tiny window, that faced a series of ugly brick buildings on the other side of the court, she had no view of the lake, and she missed the passing throngs on the avenue, who had kept her company.

Weeks went by, but still there was no work. Beverly no longer frequented the cheap French restaurant in the basement of the building next door to her, where she had always eaten. Instead, she carried a little milk and a few crackers to her own room, and lunched on them.

The cruelty of the city was beginning to tell on her; the bloom faded from her cheeks, and the light from her eyes. Each day she spent in walking up and down the city's thorofares, in search of work, grew longer than its predecessor. But the work was never found; only promises and empty words greeted her at every turn.

Winter was coming on. The chill blasts that swept over the city, lashing the lake to the east of it, foretold it. And with its first coming, Beverly found that the last of her little hoard was gone. She succeeded in living only by borrowing a few pennies, on the hope of returning it, some day, when she found work, from a kindly old woman in the next room to hers, who shared with the girl everything that her meager allowance would permit.

There came a time, however, when Beverly, worn by her long and fruitless search, gave up. Life held nothing for her, and she determined to put an end to it. As the past arrayed itself before her eyes, and recalled what life had meant to her, she shuddered. Not for all the world would she go back to John; death was preferable to that. And so one day found her standing at the Government pier in a park far to the south of where she lived. The waves dashed high over the wooden platform, coating it with ice, and spraying her with an icy shower, but she did not heed them at all; the water held too great a fascination for her.

For a moment, maybe less, she would it there having finished with this world could save her from death in its gasping, foaming whirlpools. She took a fierce joy in the fate that she was prepared to meet. For a second she closed her eyes, as she walked nearer and nearer the brink. One foot was already over the edge; the other would follow close upon it.

"Good-by!" she called out to the world, and braced herself for the final plunge.

This interesting story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

CHANGE.

O soul of mine, why tremble at the dark
Of the cold stream? Can so divine a spark
Be lost in crossing? Nay, the further shore
Is not so far and thou shalt grieve no more
The shadow vale once o'er.

O soul of mine, thou hast not known such joy
As lies before, the peace without alloy.
The partings over, gone are all thy fears,
No pain, no tears.

O soul of mine, so close allied to clay
As thou hast been, in the immortal day
Thou shalt be housed in splendor, wait for thee,
The dawn of immortality.

The Unfaithful Dog.

When Wilkinson went to his office one day last week he felt calm and contented. He hadn't any need to worry about his wife's loneliness any more, for he had bought a capital watchdog for her.

But, alas! When he arrived home his wife met him with the news that the dog had gone.

"Eh?" said Wilkinson. "Did he break the chain, then?"

"No," she replied, "but a great, ugly-looking tramp came here and acted so impudently that I let the dog loose. But instead of tearing the tramp to pieces the nasty dog went off with him."

"Great Scot!" said Wilkinson, "that must have been the tramp I bought him from!"

Misled in Milwaukee

-:- Or -:-

The Search for Xeno

By Harry Stephen Keeler

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CHAPTER X.
MORE CLIPPINGS.

AS CLINT raised his eyes from the last line of the clipping, wondering whether it were all true or some sort of hopeless tangle he was involving both himself and the girl herself, Lauterbach, seeing that he had finished, thrust out a second clipping to him. This proved to be much larger than the first. It showed by its date line and its source that it was telegraphic news from St. Paul, Minn., and that it had appeared in the Milwaukee papers on Tuesday, the very day on which Clint had boarded the train for that city. He lost no time in devouring this clipping. It read:

"MISSING MILWAUKEE GOVERNESS AND STOLEN NECKLACE TRAILED TO THIS CITY BY SECRETARY.

"PETER KROP, THE WABASHA STREET JEWELER, AGAIN IN TROUBLE.

"Mr. Eugene Nye, a private secretary of Mr. Shultz-Mullenhauser of Layton boulevard, Milwaukee, reported to the detective bureau of this city this morning the presence of Merle Seagrove, who disappeared from Milwaukee Sunday night with Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser's diamond necklace, a family heirloom.

"Mr. Nye was about to leave Milwaukee Sunday evening on a short business trip for Mr. Gustave Shultz-Mullenhauser, when he noticed the governess leaving the house with a small handbag. He suspected something wrong, and questioning a maid learned that the girl had just come from Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser's bedroom after the latter had removed her jewelry. So he followed her to the Union Depot, where she bought a ticket to St. Paul.

"Mr. Nye decided to pursue the matter further and so followed suit, with the gratifying result that he succeeded in determining, when the train arrived here Monday morning, that the girl made her way straight to the Wabasha street [illegible] location of the hotel in which she put up after leaving Krop's shop; then he proceeded to keep her in sight. This morning she purchased a ticket back to Milwaukee and left on the Milwaukee Flyer.

"After the Flyer left St. Paul, Mr. Nye decided to report the whole matter to the detective bureau of this city, and request that a telegram be sent to the Shultz-Mullenhausers to ascertain whether anything of value was missing. This was done, and reply information was elicited that the Shultz-Mullenhauser diamond necklace worth $20,000 vanished with the girl.

"Peter Krop of Wabasha street, it will be recalled by old residents of St. Paul and the Twin Cities, was in trouble with the police a number of years ago on the charge of receiving stolen jewelry. The police immediately arrested Krop and searched his stock, but no necklace of the telegraphic description given by Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser was found. He was taken to the detective bureau and questioned, but for a long time refused to talk. He finally admitted, however, that he had been visited by a Merle Seagrove of Milwaukee, whom he had known previously. On being grilled further, he also admitted that the girl had offered to dispose of a necklace which she stated was in her possession, but that he had refused to examine it or touch the matter at all, with the result that she was forced to carry it away with her again. The Milwaukee police have been notified of the train on which Mr. Nye saw her leave, so that they may make the arrest and regain the necklace which the girl has apparently found difficulty in disposing of."

As Clint read on dazedly, unbelievingly, an odd, sickening feeling in his heart, the police official watched his face with satisfaction. At the end of the younger man's perusal of the second clipping, Lauterbach without a word slid the third and remaining one over to him. This proved to be the shortest of all. It, too, had been cut from a Milwaukee paper, and by the usual penciled notation on the top it was evident that it had seen the light of print on Wednesday morning, the day after Clint's arrival in Milwaukee and the incident in which he had offered to help out Merle Seagrove by delivering her packet. It ran:

"DETECTIVE HEINEMANN OF CITY HEADQUARTERS INJURED IN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT.

"Detective Heinemann of city headquarters, on his way in a runabout last evening to Merrill Park, at North Milwaukee, where he had been sent to make an arrest on the Milwaukee Flyer from St. Paul, was injured by losing control of his steering gear and crashing into a telegraph pole. He was stunned and shaken up, and was taken to the nearest hospital, where it is said that he will be out and around again in a few days. The arrest was not made, and the accident not being known to the detective bureau in time, no substitute was sent."

"Now," remarked Lauterbach, genially, as Clint looked up from the third and last clipping, "those clippings have told you the story as well as if yours truly had wasted a lot of breath in repeating the details. I don't imagine you knew that this girl was a thief, Mr. Farrell, altho I had a faint suspicion at first that you were going to act stubborn and try to cop out those sparklers for yourself. Indeed, I couldn't quite size you up. We had you rather dead to rights, it seems, since your description is the same as that of the man who put that ad in the Free Press and the Sentinel; and, fortunately for you, we were on hand tonight at the spot the ad spoke of, when you met the girl herself." He paused. "You can see what a nice mess you were drawn into when she passed it over to you on that train—for what reason I can't just dope out. And, luckily for all of us, you've got it." He leaned back in his chair. "Let's see. Where did you tell me it was, Mr. Farrell?" He drummed impatiently on the desk. Then he withdrew a heavy gold watch and glanced at its face. "It's getting late. Where is it?"

Clint opened his lips to speak. He thought of the girl's dejected appearance, of the clear round eyes that seemed to bespeak not the slightest suggestion of evil in her whole soul. On the other hand, the damnable dovetailing facts brought out by his perusal of the three clippings flaunted themselves before his mental vision; her leaving the Shultz-Mullenhauser home after the party was over; in fact, just after the necklace had been [illegible] the [illegible] man; even her [illegible] herself [illegible] her night trip to another [illegible] there to a man who had been arrested in the past for receiving stolen jewelry; her statement, according to the latter, that there was a necklace in her possession which she wished to dispose of; her desperate attempt at the last minute in coming into Milwaukee to pass the packet she had made up to an utter stranger.

For a long minute, as Lauterbach, veteran police head, watched him unconcernedly, the facts and the lingering personality of the girl herself conflicted in his mind. Then a sudden crystallization of a half-formed decision took place as he recalled the short meeting in Juneau Park an hour back, and his declaration to her at the last minute that the packet would stay safe and untouched until she should say the word.

Rapidly his determination grew to big proportions.

"Chief Lauterbach," he said slowly, leaning forward, "I'm afraid there's something underneath this whole case that neither you nor I understand. Then, too, I doubt whether you can prove in a court of law that I've got that necklace, or anything else that might have been passed to me. I've just made up my mind on one point, tho: I'm not going to do anything until I get legal advice. So as to giving it up—well—I'll have to refuse point-blank, I guess."

The beefy-necked man opened his lips angrily, as tho to burst out into a torrent of angry words. It was more than plain that the reply he got was altogether different from the one he had expected. He studied the younger man across from him coldly, calculatingly—and apparently reached a sudden decision, for he rang the bell on his desk. The door of his private room opened, and the same uniformed attendant appeared again. Lauterbach glanced sourly up and flicked a thumb toward Clint.

"Take this man downstairs and lock him up tight. And book him immediately as an accessory to grand larceny."

Then he spun around in his swivel chair and gazed out on dark Broadway.

CHAPTER XI.
ONLY ONE WAY OUT.

DOWNSTAIRS in his cell, Clint paced restlessly up and down, up and down, wondering all the time if he were a fool in setting himself against the law of the city on account of a pair of compelling dark eyes, or if he had done the right thing, after all. Came midnight and no solution of his self-imposed proolem.

From midnight on, he lay down on the hard wooden shelf, and tried to think of some method for extricating himself from the mess without breaking his word to the girl by giving up the packet. And suddenly, as he lay on his back staring up at the flickering shadows on the whitewashed ceiling made by the electric lights in the outer corridor, the solution of legal advice came to him like lightning from a clear sky.

Mr. Gordon Pomeroy—the Milwaukee attorney who had wanted to purchase his and Xeno's jointly-owned tract of land!

Calling Gordon Pomeroy, to be sure, would necessitate his divulging the fact that Xeno had disappeared; and that was something he had tried to avoid, for he had felt all along that if Pomeroy anticipated any hitch in the legal proceedings, the latter would at once give up all thoughts of buying the tract and deal with the owners of the other adjoining one. But, now that he was snarled into a legal tangle—even a criminal tangle—something must needs be sacrificed to get himself out of it.

So it was with the greatest of impatience that he endured the rest of the night. At times he paced up and down; at other times he flung himself on the hardwood shelf, and once he succeeded in dozing off for a brief few seconds. But finally he heard the rattling of milk wagons out on the street, and saw the gray dawn creeping in thru the small window; and later, as the first rays of the eastern sun illumined the ominous, churchlike structure of the county jail across the street, he heard the shuffling of feet upstairs that heralded the change of shifts on the city police force.

At once he called the sleepy corridor guard over to him. The latter, on seeing fifty cents in silver held out to him, broke an immediate willingness to dispatch a 'phone message as soon as he should go off duty. So Clint gave him the name of Gordon Pomeroy, as well as the name of the Pabst Building which housed the latter's offices. And he instructed the man to look up Pomeroy's house address in the telephone book, to keep ringing at it to get in touch with the party, and then to tell the attorney that Mr. Clinton Farrell, of Wauwaukauchee Lake, Wisconsin, wished to see him at the central station as soon as possible.

"That ought to fetch him," Clint remarked grimly to himself, as he dropped back on the bench again, and the night guard took up his helmet and left the station basement. "And it'll be a startling surprise for him, too. But I'll bet my bottom dollar he'll come."

And sure enough, as a distant clock in the basement of the station struck nine, a tall, well-groomed man of about fifty or thereabouts, his hair slightly white, clad in an immaculate gray business suit and carrying a cane and tan gloves, stepped briskly down the corridor of the basement cell tier. He stopped hesitatingly at Clint's cell and peered in.

"Is—is this Mr. Clinton Farrell—of Wauwaukauchee Lake?"

Clint sprang to the cell door and shook the hand of the other fervently. "It surely is, Mr. Pomeroy, and I'm in trouble. Came to Milwaukee to try and smooth out certain difficulties in the sale of that Wauwaukauchee Lake property you want, and got into a worse mess than ever. And if you can help me out, I'll gladly pay for your services."

The other hastily drew over a wooden chair from the opposite wall. "Well, my boy, if it's anything to do with the property you can bank upon it I'll gladly help you. I was in hopes that we could conclude the sale this week." He paused. "And now give me the details."

So Clint told him the whole story, beginning from the time that he had first received intimation in Wauwaukauchee Lake that Xeno, the other link in the joint ownership, had disappeared, up to the time that he had found himself booked in jail as an accessory to the crime of grand larceny. "But this time he omitted nothing, describing the incident of the train, his interview with Seagrove's assistant in the brewing company's offices, the experience wherein he had grappled with his own brother on dark 26th street, and the spectacular arrest in Juneau Park where he had promised the girl of the bewitching dark eyes that he would stand by her and hold her property intact. At the conclusion he mopped his forehead and waited anxiously to see what the other would say.

The lawyer scratched his chin reflectively for a moment. "From what you say about this girl," he commented dryly, "I'm thinking that you're falling in love, my boy. And I'll advise you that there's no one who has greater wiles than a slick female crook." Clint opened his lips to object, but the other smiled and raised a hand. "Never mind objecting. I'll interview the girl myself in a few minutes, and I'll mighty soon form an estimate of her status in society.

"Now, granting," he went on, "that she is all you feel she is, there may be something underlying the case; it may be that she has some deep claim on the Shultz-Mullenhausers, and that she actually took the necklace to obtain justice—to even up the score. When people suffer injustice they often take drastic measures—measures that are almost criminal—to get reparation. And we don't know what hidden currents of enmity may have been flowing in that Layton boulevard home. At any rate I'll see the girl herself in a few moments, and I'll know better then what to do than now. I admire your chivalry in taking the stand you have, at the expense of remaining in jail all night; but it doesn't always pay, my boy—it doesn't always pay." He paused thinking.

"But now for Xeno. I can't myself fathom how he's mixed up in the affair. For that reason I'm as anxious as you to get to the bottom of it, for we've got to have that missing brother of yours if we want to exchange my money and your land. It looks just as you say; this girl must inform us whom she told about the incident on the train. For only in that way could Xeno have known that this mysterious something—this Shultz-Mullenhauser necklace—was to be delivered at 221 26th street some evening this week." Pomeroy scratched his head. "I dare say he never dreamed it was his own brother he was holding up, until you sprang forward and grabbed his gun. And from my own recollection of dark 26th street, it may be that he doesn't even know now." He shook his head perplexedly. "But why in the devil did the boy want to light out and become a hold-up man, owning half of 140 acres of the best land in Wisconsin? It's too much for me."

He stood up. "Well, I'm going over to the women's side now to see this Merle Seagrove. But I'm thinking that you'd better be prepared to be sensible and give up this packet to the police. Be patient till I return." He walked up the corridor and disappeared.

CHAPTER XII.
A TRIP TO COURT.

POMEROY was gone a full half-hour. Clint got impatient and began to pace up and down. What was the lawyer doing all this time? Had he given up the case for some unaccountable reason and left the jail? Just as Clint's spirits were dropping lower and lower and he was beginning to feel all the emotions of a caged lion again, the Milwaukee attorney appeared and beckoned him over to the barred door.

"Well, I've interviewed Miss Seagrove," he announced, "and I must say that she seems to me to be a sweet, human girl who is in trouble of some sort. Of course, that accusation itself is trouble, but there seems to be something else underneath it all. And that's quite a fine pair of eyes she has, too!" He paused. "I talked with her at length, and took up the matter of the charges against her, and possible bail for both you and her; but you in particular. And she agreed readily to turn over that packet to me as security if I can get you out on bail. She's worrying about you, Mr. Farrell. However, since she's willing to turn over that precious packet to me, I'm certainly willing to arrange for bail for both of you; for I want to get at the bottom of that Xeno mystery in which she's the key."

Pomeroy fumbled in his pocket and finally withdrew a tiny slip of paper with feminine handwriting on it. He poked it thru the bars to Clint, who read it in the half-light. It ran:

"Mr. Clinton Farrell: I am willing that Mr. Gordon Pomeroy, the bearer, take charge of the sealed packet which I gave you on the train, providing he can arrange bail for you. But I do not give permission to open it.

"MERLE SEAGROVE."

"So now," remarked Pomeroy, as Clint looked up from the note, "if you're willing, we'll take up the matter of your turning over the packet to me. A diamond necklace worth $20,000 is security enough for your respective bail bonds—and, in fact, I dare say the Shultz-Mullenhausers would drop all their charges to get back their property. And in the meantime we'll be uncovering the details in my office. I think Miss Seagrove will trust me."

So Clint, assured, told the older man the location of the packet, safely hidden in the stovepipe aperture in his room at the Wisconsin Strasse Deutscher Gasthof. Then he wrote out an order for the German proprietor, giving Pomeroy permission to examine his belongings in private, and signed it exactly as he had signed the hotel register itself.

"You'll find the packet up in the soot of the chimney pocket," he remarked grimly, "unless the detectives who have

searched my room by now are far-sighted enough to look for such a simple hiding-place."

Pomeroy left with the order. An hour later two uniformed men came down stairs and got Clint. In the alley back of the station they loaded him into a patrol wagon, and as he mounted the short steps that led into it he found with satisfaction that Merle Seagrove herself was again on the cushioned seat opposite him. Gordon Pomeroy, it seemed, was losing no time in making the wheels of the law move around. On the ride to what evidently was the courthouse, Clint made no effort to talk with the girl, on account of the presence of the two police officers. But on the way up the broad stone steps of that building he touched her arm reassuringly, and she smiled back at him.

Once inside, they were whisked upstairs in an elevator and into a courtroom, where a fair sized number of attaches and loungers were present. Prominent among the figures up near the bar was the distinguished, erect form of Pomeroy.

Then followed a rather dazzling preliminary examination to Clint, who had never been in anything more than a small town courtroom in his life. His honor, up on the bench, seemed concerned, however, only with the actual value of the stolen necklace. Finally he leaned over to the bailiff and said, in a low, tired voice:

"I think about five thousand apiece will be sufficient."

While the judge was proceeding into his chambers, Pomeroy beckoned to a short, squat, baldheaded man near him, who went straight to the bailiff's desk, passed over several imposing-looking legal papers, and signed several others. By the instantaneous disappearance of the two uniformed men who had accompanied them in the patrol, Clint knew that the miracle had been accomplished, that both he and the girl were free—free at least to go with the one man who had stepped into the breach in time.

Gordon Pomeroy nodded and beckoned them from the courtroom into an elevator. As they walked from the foyer downstairs, Clint saw by the big clock that it was just eleven in the morning. He had been in durance vile over twelve hours, and the remembrance of that experience made a perceptible shiver travel over him.

Outside on the curbing a large, expensive touring car was drawn up with a trim, smart-appearing chauffeur on the front seat. Pomeroy opened the door, and both Clint and the girl stepped in. The door slammed and the car shot off with a rush.

It drew up at the tall, imposing Pabst Building on the river. There Pomeroy bade the chauffeur wait, and led the way to the elevators. On the tenth floor he opened the door of a splendidly furnished suite of offices, and conducted the two younger people into a private room, fitted with heavy green velvet carpet and mahogany furniture. Then he closed the door.

The girl was first to break the silence, as Pomeroy without a word withdrew the sealed packet from his breast pocket, scrutinized it oddly, and, with a curious sidewise glance at her dark eyes, locked it in a small steel safe which was built in the wall.

"Mr. Farrell," she said, turning her gaze on Clint, "I wonder if down in your heart you believe I stole Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser's diamond necklace? I know that every fact in the case is against me."

"No," he shot back, utterly captivated now by the atmosphere of girlishness and helplessness about her. "A girl with a face like yours never stole anything—unless maybe a male heart here and there."

At his impulsive compliment she smiled radiantly, but a little wistfully.

"Thank you. You have believed in me when everybody else doubted me. In addition, you stood by me. And I am going to tell you and Mr. Pomeroy here just what WAS in that sealed packet."

CHAPTER XIII.

AN EXPLANATION.

"YES," the girl went on, after a short pause, "matters have reached the point where I must tell the truth of that packet. And I suppose that an innocent party will have to suffer unless"—she turned to Pomeroy—"unless you, Mr. Pomeroy, can show me another method for extricating myself. But I will tell you first."

"Exactly," said Pomeroy, leaning back in his swivel chair. He motioned to two other chairs near the wall. "Sit down, both of you." He waited till Clint and the girl had seated themselves. "This talk of an innocent party suggests to me that you have been trying to shield some one. And at a venture I'd guess that that party's name is Phillip Seagrove. Am I right?"

She nodded. "Yes, you are. It is my brother for whose sake I have been trying to keep the contents of that packet secret—not for mine. And from that you can readily guess that the contents were not Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser's diamond necklace."

She stopped a moment, as tho at a loss to know just where or how to begin. Then she went on:

"It is true that I went to St. Paul late Sunday night; that I stepped into Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser's bedroom before I left; that I took with me only a handbag. All those things are true. But I left a note on the top of her jewel box, telling her that urgent business called me away suddenly, and that I would be back about Tuesday night. And—and—nothing in the cruel newspaper reports has been said about that note." She paused. "But I am getting away from the pivotal fact of the matter—the real reason why I went to St. Paul—why I was forced to call on Peter Krop, the man who had been in trouble before with the St. Paul police—and why I had to offer for sale a necklace; but not, gentlemen, Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser's necklace, I declare on my word of honor.

"It all came about thru Phil," she explained hurriedly. "It was in St. Paul that we lived after our mother died; and it was there that Phil worked for Mr. Krop, the Wabasha street jeweler. It was an old, story; the poolrooms and the races that were being run down at Juarez, Mexico, before the present Mexican trouble. I dare say you know the truth now."

"He took money belonging to Krop—to play the races with?" Clint put in eagerly.

She nodded. "He forged fifteen monthly salary checks at eighty dollars apiece, and cashed them in various places about the Twin Cities. The poolrooms got them all. Then, when the month came around—and the checks came in—he was face to face with arrest."

"But he wasn't arrested for some reason?" asked Pomeroy. "If he had been, he would have been in the penitentiary for more than the number of years I figure have elapsed since the races at Juarez."

"No, he wasn't arrested. Peter Krop was a shrewd enough business man to know that arresting Phil would never get him back one penny of the stolen money, which amounted to twelve hundred dollars. But, instead, he forced Phil to sign a confession which he locked in his safe with the twelve forged checks; then he gave him exactly three years in which to pay it all back, or be sent to prison. And Phil jumped at the chance as a drowning man jumps at a straw.

"We came to Milwaukee," she continued. "A year flew by. Phil seemed to have unusually bad luck and trouble in getting work which more than paid his living expenses, altho he is bright and energetic; one thing, at least, was an improvement on the old order of things—the scare he had had cured him entirely of all desire [illegible]. Finally a splendid chance came to him in this city of breweries to join the business force of the Southern Wisconsin Brewing Company, just starting up about that time. The first year he didn't earn much; but he worked hard, so hard. And that year brought each of us some degree of success."

"Had you gone with Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser yet?" asked Clint, curiously.

"Not until a year ago," she replied evenly. "I was teaching French and music in a fashionable girls' school on Layton boulevard. Then came a desirable opportunity for going with Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser and devoting all my time and abilities to just her two children, Adolph and Meta. I took it, of course. And just about that time there was a reorganization of the Southern Wisconsin Brewing Company, and Phil jumped a big step; he got the position of business manager of the company in its new offices on East Water street."

"And so, I presume," put in Pomeroy, "you finally heard from this Peter Krop of St. Paul, who still held those forged checks and the confession which he had forced from Phillip?"

"Indeed we did. The three years were not up, but last Saturday Phil received a letter down at his office from Peter Krop; in it the latter told him that he had been keeping track of him from a distance and knew of his rise in the business field. And he demanded that Phil at once pay back that twelve hundred dollars, plus six hundred dollars interest, or he would turn over those papers to the brewing company people."

"Good Lord!" ejaculated Pomeroy. "The man was blackmailing—when asking for six hundred dollars interest on such terms." He figured a moment in his mind. "Sixteen and a fraction per cent interest per year." Frowning, he added: "And what did you do on that proposition?"

"Phil came to me Sunday evening," the girl replied, "during the party that Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser was having downstairs. All he had saved up so far—he had not been advanced very long, you see—was six hundred dollars. He told me the situation and showed me the letter from Krop. As I read it, I could see how adroitly the latter suggested that Phil borrow the necessary amount from the treasury of the company and say nothing to the officials." She stopped in introspection, and then went on: "The upshot of our conference was that I agreed to go at once to Krop with Phil's six hundred, with four hundred of my own that I had saved—oh, so painstakingly, and try and get back the canceled checks and the confession. But if that should fail I was to offer Krop the only thing I received at my mother's death—the pearl necklace given to her at her wedding. So I——"

"But now comes the critical moment," Pomeroy interpolated, raising his hand. "I recall your saying that you wrote out a note, telling Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser that you were going away on a sudden trip; that you went in her bedroom and placed it on top of her jewel box where she would be sure to find it. Am I correct? If so, did you notice that one of the housemaids saw you coming out of that room with your handbag?"

"All that you say is true," Merle replied earnestly. "I do not know whether the necklace was gone when I tiptoed in there or not. It was undoubtedly in the jewel box when Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser went down to the kitchen, for she would not lie about the matter. But several minutes must have elapsed since she had gone, and several more may have elapsed before she returned. Anything might have taken place in that room while no one was in it. In fact, it——"

"This maid certainly ought to be kept in mind," Clint put in uneasily. "It seems to me that——" He stopped. "But Merle—Miss Seagrove—was the window unlocked? Could an outsider have pulled that stunt off?"

"The window was not only unlocked, but it was up about an inch," the girl returned quickly. "And that window leads to a porch roof that has columns running down to the ground. That side porch is visible from Layton boulevard, and the interior of the room itself can be seen by any one who might skirt the small iron fence and cross the dark lawn."

"Then," commented Pomeroy, "we not only have a possibility that the maid was in that room before you entered it, but still two worse possibilities for you: that after you entered it the maid either returned and destroyed the note, thus incriminating you hopelessly, or else some one entered the room by way of the porch pillars, pocketed the string of jewels, and carried off the note, too."

"That," remarked the girl, sadly, "is an old, old story with those who are accused of crimes. What good would it do for me to suggest such a thing to the police? They would only laugh it to scorn. But—but——" She stopped undecidedly. "But there is one tiny fact which might have something to do with it, and yet might not. Shall I give it, or do——"

"By all means," returned Pomeroy. "If that packet, as you say, contains these papers, then Clinton Farrell over there and myself are going to believe you. But the police will not be convinced that you didn't carry off the [illegible] to answer him, and [illegible]."

"Only this," she said hurriedly. "There was news in the society columns of the paper about Mrs. Shultz-Mullenhauser's function that Sunday night; and some mention was made of the Shultz-Mullenhauser family necklace. Only that afternoon, when I was walking along Layton boulevard, a man a block away from the house asked me where the Shultz-Mullenhauser residence was. I pointed it out to him, and straightway forgot about the whole matter. But that night, as I left the house with my handbag, I passed the same man, standing near a free trunk up the street. Did he live in the neighborhood? Evidently not, since he didn't know which was the Shultz-Mullenhauser residence. And yet what was he doing thereabouts again?" She paused. "I suppose, tho, that it was only a coincidence after all, and that I ought not draw any conclusions from it. At any rate——"

"But what sort of description did this man have?" asked Pomeroy, languidly drawing over a sheet of paper and a fountain pen. "We are dealing with details now, and want the chaff as well as the wheat."

The girl paused a moment, recalling. Then she spoke: "He was a nondescript person, except for a most striking pair of eyes. One seemed to be deep brown, and the other——"

Clint rose up from his chair. "And that other eye was blue?" he almost shouted.

She nodded bewilderedly.

"Then by the great horn spoon," he cried, "I can tell you who the fellow was; and you'll grant that we've found who got away with that necklace!" His face fell. "It won't get the necklace itself back—but call up police headquarters, Mr. Pomeroy, and ask for the description of Double-Eye Eddie McGuirk, taken back to Nagahotah, Wisconsin, the middle of this week!"

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it, and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

Cheering.

Reggie (in London)—"I am going to the front, after all."

The Girl—"Oh, I'm so glad. It's so much more interesting reading the lists of killed and wounded when you know some one at the front."

THE YELLOW CUR.

Once upon a time there was a man who set out upon a quest.

"Where are you going?" asked his friends. "That is a secret," said the man, "but I know that the journey will take me many days and weeks and years. Those of you who love me best and are not afraid of the journey may come with me."

Now, the man was a great favorite with the people of his city; more, he was good and wise, and his advice had kept them from much blundering.

So now a great many of them cried aloud, "I will go!" and the heart of the man was glad. They set off from the city, a great company, for even the horses and cats and the dogs and the children loved the man.

"I also will go," said the man's wife, who loved him, altho she saw no reason for the quest.

Far in the rear of the procession trailed an ugly cur, who limped painfully, as he walked. He had not known the man in his prosperous days before he undertook the quest, and he merely followed the party because he thought they might give him something to eat, and he was homeless and hungry.

When the party camped, the man called the dog to him and patted him and offered him food. That night the cur slept beside the man.

Next morning the procession moved forward again, but the spirit seemed to have gone from it. The young men began to make excuses and speak of the sweethearts they had left behind, and a great party of them bade the man goodby and started for home.

Next day the older men spoke among themselves of their business and social affairs and the loneliness of wives and daughters left behind, and they also bade good-by to the man and started on their homeward way.

The man was so sad at this that he sat beside the fire with his head in his hands. Presently he felt a soft nose nuzzle his hand, and crouched at his feet was the cur, trying to comfort him.

Next day the women took thought about the houses and pleasant gardens they had left, and with their husbands and children, they also rode away. Among them was the man's wife, who said that she went to make things comfortable for him when he should return from his senseless quest. But the man felt so badly that he made no answer at all, just sat and caressed the cur which licked his hand.

On and on traveled the man, swiftly to forget his sorrow, and painfully, far in the rear, limped the footsore cur. At [illegible] came to a desert, and so weary [illegible] that he lay senseless on the hot sands until the quiet stars came out and brooded over the desert and cooled the air. Then the man opened his heavy eyes and moaned feebly, for he knew that he had not long to live.

"So I gave up my life in a vain quest. I have not found faith to the death, nor dauntless love!" cried he sadly.

"Nay, you have found that which you sought," said a voice. The man looked about, but no person was near. His eyes wandered toward the horizon, from whence a lonely figure came limping toward him. As he came nearer the man saw that the cur's tongue hung far out and his breath came in gasps, but in his ugly eyes shone a light that made them wondrous beautiful to the man.

"I cannot leave him," cried the man, tenderly, fondling the ugly cur.

"You shall not leave him," said the voice. "His faithfulness shall know no dying. You shall dwell together in the great beyond."

When they found the body of the man they wondered why his face wore such a look of peace and why the body of the limping, ugly cur was nestled in his arms.

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Haunts of Fear

By Frederic Knowles

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CHAPTER XX.

THERE was a sudden falling of earth that rattled on the bow of the launch, and then a startled cry. Overhead had appeared a sudden patch of daylight, and I saw a man waist-deep in the water ahead. Almost without thinking I bent down and groped blindly for the crank. Half-consciously I heard the rasp of the levers, while I felt about in the gloom and then jerked upward with all my force. The thundering roar of the exhaust filled the narrow place, and the planking quivered under me with the sudden vibration. I caught blindly at the rail as the clutch went in, and we had leaped thru the matting of creepers, out of the gloom into the brilliant sunshine.

Miss Arlington put the wheel over, and we headed till I thought we should capsize. A great splash of water leaped over the rail. The clutch went out while the propeller sobbed in the reverse, and then we had suddenly, and without warning almost, shot forward. I saw a startled figure appear on the bank behind us, and beyond him a second. Farther back some one shouted excitedly. And then we took the curve.

There was one fleeting second in which I saw a man pause an instant while in the act of running, come down flat-footed and raise his arm. The weapon in his fingers rocked with the reports and smoke dimmed his hand. But either thru excitement or haste he missed, and then we had disappeared from view.

We passed the Glory lying close in to the bank, and I, turned about in my seat with my rifle ready, caught only a momentary glimpse of the craft and the empty cockpit with a small package lying on the stern seat. Of that package you shall hear again, but how I very nearly lost my life at last because of it. But at the time I did not even feel a sense of curiosity at sight of it, for it was at the same moment that I realized we were going very fast.

Of the passage of that narrow stream I will not [illegible] A sense of escaped realization, while the launch rocked and smeared mud on her white sides and tore the outer twigs from protruding bushes and left a trail of foam and shattered moss in her wake.

But at last the pool and the main creek once more. Miss Arlington glanced at me for one fleeting instant.

"Which way?"

"I took a lady boating," I returned, wiping the water from my face, "and I'll see her home."

She smiled ever so little and whirled the wheel. It seemed as tho she was changed in her manner since that moment we had passed the Glory. More light-hearted, I thought, than since I had known her. Perhaps it was due to the excitement of the chase, I decided.

The remainder of the trip was at a more moderate speed, but at last Shadow Lake was before us, and the launch broke out into the blue water there with a rush that sent ripples dancing against the sand. I remember that the day was growing warm, almost as if it were again Indian summer. Three days before winter had gathered its forces for a descent upon the land, and then, all at once, had withheld its heavy hand while the sun smiled for yet a little while. But the warm breath from the South was only a fragment; a few days more and winter would be upon the country at last.

As we swung along the contour of the point, Miss Arlington turned to me. I fumbled with my watch at her words.

"Ten o'clock." I told her.

"And already we have had an adventure this morning," said the girl.

"Shall we—er—begin the search today?" I asked.

"I must see what has happened at the cottage. Perhaps Aunt Molly will have something for us. Those scoundrels might have given her a clew this morning. You notice, sir, my father was not one of the crew?" she returned in a low voice. "But yet, after they learned who we were, I do not believe they followed us. They were afraid it was some one else."

"And who could this some one else be?" I asked.

"Those men are hardly within the law," she countered, with a glance.

"No," said I, remembering the theft of the Mouse, the attack on my cottage, and what had happened that morning. "No, I should hardly think so."

We drew up at the boathouse. I caught the chain fast and put out my hand to the girl. And at the same moment the boards of the landing rattled behind us, and a stout negress in bright calico rounded the corner of the building.

"Aunt Molly!" cried the girl.

"Laws, chile, where you been?" demanded the old woman.

I gasped. In one hand she trailed my rifle.

"Dem villains busted de boathouse," continued Aunt Molly, without waiting for an answer to her question, "an' dey tuk all the ile and the gasoline, an' everything. But dey didn't bodder aroun' the house, you bet yo' life. Dat Roper, he come to the door an' put his mug in, an' I says, 'What you want?' an' he says he goin' to come in, an' I tells him to get out, but he jest laffs an' steps inside."

"Yes, Aunt Molly," said Miss Arlington, "and what then?"

"I says, 'you get out ob here,' but he laffs again, an' I heabed up dis old wippim an' busted the plaster over the door. Well, you should see him go. Nothin' slow 'bout dat exerdus, I reckon. Land!"

"Fine, Aunt Molly!" said the girl. "And what did——"

"Yo' better run up to de house, chile," interrupted the negress.

"Why?"

"'Cause I reckon yo' pap has come home, chile."

The girl went white.

"Aunt Molly, you're not joking?"

"Me joke about dat?" The old woman's voice carried a reproach.

"But, Aunt Molly——"

"No, chile, I'se not jokin,' I reckon. Yo' pap has come home at last."

The girl waited for nothing more, but was gone up the path in an instant.

Glad for her sake, at least, that this thing had come about, I watched her disappear, and then faced about to find the negress at my elbow.

"And so Mr. Arlington has returned," I said, because it was the only thing I could think of to say.

"Yessuh, he has, an' in powerful bad shape, I reckon."

"How do you mean?"

"He's been in some scrape, suh, a tolerable-real one, too."

"Wounded?"

"Well, I [illegible] or three times and [illegible] under him, and I been 'tendin' him, but 'tween me an' you, I don't think it's any use. That man am powerful sick."

"He couldn't have come far, then," I said.

"Dere's where you're wrong, suh. I think that's what finished him."

"But perhaps he isn't hurt so badly. He is merely exhausted."

"'Taint dat, suh; he looks like he was daid already. I tell you he is goin' to die sure."

"If I might see him," I said, "I might do something for him."

"No use. He is pretty low now. Stranger ain't goin' to do him any good. I was afraid he was goin' to die befo' you two got here. I been watchin."

"But, auntie," I protested, "you don't appear to feel sorry for him."

"Course I do, but that don't do no good now. I feel powerful more sorry for that pore chile what's goin' to be alone now. Mistah, between you an' me I reckon on Massa Arlington was a powerful bad man. He raise the debbil an' rear aroun', and sometimes he treat that pore chile mean. Only she is loyal an' don't ever let on any, you can bet. Sometimes he is pretty bad for weeks."

"I understand he was away a great deal," I said.

"Yessuh. Of late months he been away quite a lot. He join the gang."

"The gang?"

"Yessuh."

"What gang?"

"If he wasn't dyin' in theah, mister, I reckon you wouldn't get no answer to that, but as it is, I reckon you can't hurt him now. He belong to dat gang what goes sneakin' aroun' at nights wid dem boats."

"And what was in the boats?"

"Bless' if I know. Only they was mighty particular."

"How do you mean?"

"Nobody was 'lowed near dem, an' they was all mighty fierce."

"Oh," said I, "and how long has this been going on, auntie?"

"Bout a yeah or so, I reckon. Only Massa Arlington, don't belong at first."

"When did he join them, auntie?"

"Last spring, I reckon, or there'bouts. I can't say fo' certain."

"And does Miss Arlington know of this?"

"Well, I reckon she suspec', but she don't know."

I got down into my launch and bent over the engine. Aunt Molly regarded me curiously.

"You goin' away?" she asked.

"Yes, auntie; there is nothing I can do here."

"Most noon; you better stay. I reckon we will be all lonely now."

"I shall come back," I told her. "Perhaps this evening. You are absolutely certain Mr. Arlington can't get well?"

"Dead, suh, that man will be befo' evenin'," said Aunt Molly, grimly.

Soberly I bent down, took the cap off the tank and got one of the spare cans of gasoline from forward and emptied it into the tank, and oiled around afterward. Then I bailed the little water out of the cockpit and wiped the woodwork dry. When I glanced up again Aunt Molly had disappeared.

The propeller shaft boxing appeared to leak slightly, and I repaired that as best I might, all the while listening at intervals for an approaching craft, but from the lower end of the lake there was no sound save once, when two belated birds went winging southward high overhead.

Then there was a step beside me, and I glanced up to observe Miss Arlington standing above me.

CHAPTER XXI.

"YOU are going?" she said slowly.

"If there is nothing I can do?" I told her.

"Then—then you heard?"

"Aunt Molly told me."

"I am afraid he—he is—not going to get well, Mr. Bennant."

I did not reply to that.

"And he—he wishes to see you."

I must have looked my astonishment.

"He wished it," she said.

I stepped onto the landing.

"And so Aunt Molly told you that he——" she hesitated.

I bowed.

"I understand," she murmured.

"You see it had appeared best that I go away, altho I hope I am not a stranger any more, Miss Arlington—and had not meant to desert you—I by Molly to come back this evening. [illegible] I thought [illegible] she spe[illegible] ing, go [illegible] understand[illegible] a little whi[illegible] d then [illegible] see [illegible] me. [illegible] added, referring to the [illegible] it was really only—only certainty at [illegible] appreciation."

We turned up the walk and into the cottage. As I mounted the steps I thought of the day before and of the tracks I had made on the white boards. I remember vaguely that they were spotless once more.

Inside we found ourselves in a little hall with paneled walls and a rug underfoot; a door opened to either side. Miss Arlington turned to the left. We passed thru a little room something similar to my den at Wind Cave, and so into a bedroom with gray paper on the walls and old-fashioned pictures staring down at us from broad black frames headed with gold. The blinds had been drawn low and the room lay in a half-twilight, so that one saw only vague shadow and broad, faint masses of shade and darker shade, with no detail. The bed, with huge arches of black wood at either end, stood out from the white coverlet and emphasized the pallor of the face propped high among the pillows.

At the time I was only dully conscious of all this, but yet I remembered it afterward, for death is truly the most impressive thing we know.

"You are Frank Bennant?" said the propped-up figure, weakly.

I bowed.

"From Wind Cave?"

"Yes, sir."

"Henry Hamilton's heir?"

"Yes, sir."

The figure paused at that, and glanced about a moment.

"Carris," he said presently, "I would like to speak to this gentleman alone for a few moments. It is important."

Miss Arlington turned and went away. I heard the door close faintly.

"Take a chair, Mr. Bennant. A close one if you please; my voice is about done, and I have quite a little to say."

I sat down as requested so near him that my sleeve brushed the bed.

For a moment the figure among the pillows lay silent with his eyes upon my face. Great dark eyes of power they were, and with something in them that I thought had come there since I had entered.

"Mr. Bennant," he began rather abruptly, "I am dying."

I had no answer to that.

"Would you believe a dying man's word?" he went on.

"I don't know," I told him, truthfully. "There have been people who have made sacrifices."

"Ah," he said, "so there have." And then added, "But I was not one of them." I remained silent.

"This is my last day on earth," he commenced presently, "and I realize that fully, Mr. Bennant. I have been a scoundrel, and I realize that, also. And that I have committed many sins. And I am dying partly because of that very fact. There is nothing left, when I am gone, but a memory which is not altogether pleasant to my people. It is my own fault, sir, and I am not complaining, but I believe I have that much right to speak of myself. Sir, it has ever been myself. I would be honest and rich, sir, or I would be dishonest and rich; but I would not be honest and poor, and I never thought I should be dishonest and poor—but I am, Mr. Bennant. There is nothing left for my people when I am gone but a little money, a very little. You will find my bank book in the tin box on the bookcase. Also some currency in the safe beneath the window, perhaps two thousand dollars. You will find the combination by reading backward from seven the numbers in my watch case. You are to dispose of these things as you think best benefits my daughter, who has nothing else now. I am trusting you, I who never trusted any one before."

"Thank you, sir," I said. "But I——" I paused and glanced at him.

"Go on," he told me weakly. "You wished to ask me something."

"I should like to know why you trust me," I said curiously.

"Because I can make no mistake in the result of Henry Hamilton's judgment," he said slowly. "There was a brainy man, sir."

"You knew him?"

"Yes, but that is neither here nor there. I would like for you to find some place for the old negress, Molly. I believe that is all. You will remember, sir, that I told you nothing but which concerns my family."

"Yes, sir, but you are leaving things where they are yet a mene[illegible]e."

"Please explain."

"This mystery, sir; there is a terrible creature that [illegible]ant? Can you give any light upon what subject?"

"Ah," he said weakly, "and so you know of that! Do not be worried further about him, Mr. Bennant."

"You mean that——" I began, but he interrupted feebly.

"You have no cause for worry from that source now," he repeated.

"Since when, sir?"

"Since yesterday morning."

All at once I remembered that spot [illegible]e in the swamp with the great birds [illegible] ever lower against the blue sky. circling [illegible] I knew now what had lain [illegible] I thought [illegible] the sun, among the yellow there under [illegible] grass.

"But there is some[illegible]thing else," I said, after a little. "Why [illegible] do swift boats race of nights against the [illegible] dawn?"

"Ah," he repeated, "why do they?"

"You won't tell me that?"

He turned his face toward the wall.

"They were destroying your property this morning," I said. "Today they fired at your daughter and myself."

"And so they did that?" he murmured.

"You may rest easy there, Mr. Bennant. You shall not be molested again—if you do not interfere."

"If we do not interfere?" I repeated.

"You heard me?"

"You won't tell that? Why won't you?"

"Because," he said, "I am dying. Sir, my secrets die with me."

His voice was scarcely more than a

WOMEN!
MOTHERS!
DAUGHTERS
You who tire easily; are pale, haggard and worn; nervous or irritable; who are subject to fits of melancholy or the "blues," get your blood examined for iron deficiency.
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whisper. I realized he was sinking very fast. I got to my feet and leaned over him.

"You would care to see Miss Arlington?" I questioned.

He nodded weakly.

When we had returned he seemed to revive for a moment, but I knew it was only that final struggle of the flame before the dark. I turned away and stood looking down dully at a number of books scattered about the table. There was a small pile of manuscript black with corrections, and I felt a sort of pity for this work which would never be finished. After all, no one can even plan for the day before him. Outside the breeze rattled the dead vines at the window, and even the restless murmur of the trees came faintly. The last withered leaves scuffed restlessly in the sunshine. For a long time I stood quite motionless, and then all at once I heard behind me a sob.

I saw the girl's pale face as she glanced up at me, and then at the upturned face against the coverlet that was whiter still. A man had gone out of life in that short time, but John Arlington's face was quite calm before that visitation, Death, which comes to every one at last. For no one goes so low that he does not find him out, or climbs so high that he does not strike him down.

CHAPTER XXII.

UPON the remainder of that day I shall dwell briefly, for I do not have the heart to write of it at length. The girl's sorrow was mine, and I understood. And for the dead man, out of my pity rose a great sense of admiration. In those last moments, without being able to look forward, he had refused to glance back. Loyal to his comrades to the bitter end, altho their hands, I could not doubt, had laid him low, he might have been an inspiration to a broken courage. I could not admire his life, but I could almost envy him in dying. And then I learned something else.

Perhaps, realizing the state of finances in the Arlington cottage, it had come to John Arlington to make the request that he did. He asked to be buried under the big pine that stood alone on the slope of the point beyond the house. And so a costly and otherwise laborious task was made simple. The girl rebelled at the thought of a last resting-place so far in the wilderness, but it was her father's command, and she had promised. Hence we set about it. I constructed a rough casket and made a grave where he had asked that it be made, and having finished this latter, went down the hill under the last yellow of the fading sky.

Aunt Molly had prepared a meal, but I had little heart for eating, and Miss Arlington left her food untouched and turned away. Even the negress, despite her words of the morning, had come to understand at last, I suppose, for I saw she had been weeping. Undoubtedly he had been a hard man and in all probability a lawless one, but after all he had been the head of the household and a familiar figure. Whether the old woman forgave him I cannot say, but I knew she grieved now.

And as for the girl—it was pitiful and I had no heart to see her sorrow. Her father had come home only to leave forever. The thought was indeed hard to bear, but he might never have come at all, and that would have been harder still. I thought of the great birds dropping down among the trees and shuddered, and after all there was a sort of comfort in the way John Arlington died as compared to the way he might have died.

I thought it all out on the veranda in the chill of the evening, while I watched the last lights go and the lake become black marble in the dusk and purple shadow creep over everything. A few stars came out faintly in the cloudy heavens the way they do before a storm. Winter was long overdue, and the past few days had only been a brief respite before the coming of the relentless snow. I knew this second flash of Indian summer would not last; that its close was very near. And presently it was black night, with everything possessing that look of far-away sameness, and only my glowing cigar that was different, or my hand as I took it from my lips.

After a little the door opened softly and Miss Arlington joined me. She had regained her composure somewhat, and the fresh night air brought a little of the old-time sparkle back to her eyes. After all, I believed she saw it had been for the best. Right always wins at last. There was no comparison between this end that had been and that other possibility she had seen for some months. How her father had come by his death I knew not, nor did she, but death and disgrace are infinitely better than death and disgrace and humiliation. Again came to me thoughts of that place in the swamp where the birds had been, and I knew that Mr. John Arlington had not died alone. Perhaps he had not been the best of fathers or the best of men, but I felt certain, somehow, that he had been brave on the Crooked Road. In dying he had refused to betray his comrades. Even at the last he had been honorable to his fellows, and a saint could not ask more than that for his requiem.

There is companionship in sorrow, even as there is in misery, and so I was not silent. After all, grief must have its way, and there is strength in a common bond. I told Miss Arlington all that frankly, for I knew that, with these realizations past her, she might look forward with no blot but memory.

"That is true," she said at last, "but the world——"

"The world has no part here," I told her. "This is among ourselves, and what else matters? Later you can reason it out with the world."

"Some day we shall know why these boats go past of nights, and then the world will cast reflections," she returned.

"And then," said I, "it will only be memory to torture you, and even that pain will disappear with time. How much better it is this way."

"But he might have—have changed," she protested.

I was silent.

"You do not think so?"

"You will forgive me, Miss Arlington."

"But he might."

"Ah," I said, "you are not worthy of yourself when you seek the dark side."

"I don't understand."

"If you allow yourself to think he might have reformed, you keep your sorrow alive by a supposition."

"You would have me condemn him?"

"Not at all."

"Then——"

"Listen," I said. "He was tempted; perhaps it seemed the easiest way. We who have kept within the law must not judge lightly those who have not. Because we never obeyed the inclination we never had, we cannot place ourselves superior. The law is absolutely selfish, but it is only to band the greater people against the few who are more selfish. For this affair will some day come a reckoning. Your father's disgrace would have been infinitely greater. The law cannot be beaten at last, and I do not believe he was a man to surrender. Really it is best that it came this way. I believe you will see it in a different light some day. But I should not have told you this—tonight."

The girl was silent. Chin in hand, she was looking out at the darkness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE next morning went by at last, with the pitiful funeral beneath the big pine, and that sorrowful return to that cottage which would never know John Arlington again. I filled the grave and draped some green vines at the head, for there were no flowers. After that I walked along the shore of the lake, trying to come to myself again, and so at last it was noon.

Contrary to my expectations, the sky had cleared and the day was as bright as its immediate predecessors. The lake sparkled in a warmth that very nearly approached days of early fall, and a faint haze hung about the pines along the shore. Having at last returned to the landing before the boathouse, I dropped onto the white planks and watched the little waves come trickling onto the sand below me. The previous night and the forenoon had passed quietly. To my ears had come no sound of motor craft, nor any sign of our pursuers of yesterday. I began to believe that John Arlington had been correct, that we were not going to be molested again.

But why we had been molested at all was a mystery to me, unless the gang sought revenge for the escape of their prisoner at Wind Cave. And then, after all, it was no more of a mystery than many other things. Every discovery made the whole affair more unexplainable. The theft of the Mouse, my adventure at the cabin beyond Point Scarlet, the return of the Mouse, the attack on me at the boathouse, my mysterious visitor at Wind Cave, the disappearance of the whisky flask, the visit of the Glory (for there could be no doubt but that it had been Arlington's launch), the escape of the prisoner and my experience with him afterward, the lookout tree in the swamp, Archie's failure to return, the pursuit of Miss Arlington and myself in my launch by the villains in the Glory, John Arlington's return and his death, and, last but not least, the motive for all this mysterious business which kept a gang of lawless men infesting the surrounding country.

Arlington's dying words had led me to believe that he had killed the fearful figure I had seen at the cabin, but he had not explained it, nor accounted for him. The woman's track I had seen at Wind Cave was that of Miss Arlington when she came for aid the previous Sunday, but either she did not know or would not tell me of the "friend" who had gone away in a canoe and been swallowed up in a labyrinth of the swamp. And so I had learned little; I was no nearer the solution of the mystery than I had been that day when I put down the lake before the gale in my little sailing craft. And even Arlington's assurance that we should not be molested again was of small comfort, for everything else still gave cause for terrible apprehension. And of that one comforting assurance I had yet to learn that there had been a fearful mistake somewhere.

And, indeed, the time has almost come for me to describe that. Only a few moments more of dreamy imagings, as I sat on the white planks with my feet swinging idly just above reach of the little waves dancing in the sun. Across the half-mile of water the pines ranged upward, their trunks and the ground beneath them swathed in the faint purple of noon, and here and there little cliffs of gray stone showing brightly. I was wondering if the snow had gone entirely from the shadows, when a sudden appealing cry came to me from the direction of the cottage. Without thinking, I found myself upon my feet and staring about anxiously, but not for long.

A tall figure in a red mackinaw had suddenly rounded the corner of the cottage, and a second was running along the veranda, while yet a third villain struggled with Miss Arlington just beyond the gate. After that one call there had been no further outcry; the surprise was complete.

I glanced about at a loss for the moment. My pistol lay on the table in the cottage, and I cursed myself for my neglect; but to blame myself was useless now. There was a canoe pole on the landing, and I caught it up and ran. I was half way up the slope before any one noticed me, and then the mackinawed figure wheeled and fumbled for his revolver. On I came. The holster flap seemed to bother him, and I was within ten yards when he finally had his weapon free.

"Keep back!" he snapped.

I made no reply, but raised my stick.

"Keep back!" he repeated.

Seeing the sudden throw of his forearm, I swerved, and thru excitement or poor aim the shot missed me. Before he could fire again I had come within reach and struck him. He stumbled backward with his mouth wide and the blood running from it, and I shortened my weapon to catch the second scoundrel in the chest. He let go Miss Arlington at that, and reeled against the fence. Apparently he was unarmed, and he made no effort to attack me, altho not badly hurt, I believe. All at once I was aware of the third attacker closing in from the side. I whirled my stick, but he was too close, and I only caught him a glancing blow. Before I could repeat it he had closed in and struck me fair on the jaw. I was fairly staggered, and he followed the first blow with a second, while I fell weakly onto the dead grass.

"And that's all from you," he panted, as he stood above me with his pistol drawn. I wondered that he had not shot me before.

I opened my lips to answer him, and then remembered Miss Arlington, and so closed them with some feeling of regret. I glanced about without offering to move, for I recognized the rage in my captor's eyes, and knew he was not to be trifled with. A fourth fellow had appeared from apparently nowhere and was standing guard over the girl. I saw with anger that her hands were bound.

"Well," said I sullenly, "you've got the best of us, I see."

"So we have," returned my captor. "And now we got to make you safe."

"What?" I cried, thinking he meant to shoot me.

"Not that," he said, reading my

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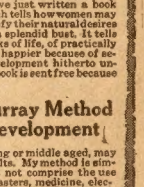

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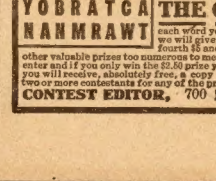

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thought. "You are worth more to us alive, my bucko. I am only going to tie you up," and he produced a stout cord. "There," he said, when he had lashed my ankles and wrists, "I reckon that will hold you a while." And then, "Got the girl safe?" he demanded of the others.

"I reckon," said one.

"All right, then let's go on. I'll catch you fellows at the boat, after I have a little talk with this gent here."

"What's your idea?" I demanded.

"You know well enough. Bring the stuff to the edge of the swamp where Shadow Lake joins it, and you will get the girl back safe and sound. Otherwise I am not going to guarantee you anything. We will give you till tomorrow evening to see this thing right—but no longer."

I struggled into a sitting position.

"See here," said I, as calmly as I could, "I don't know what you are driving at, fellow. If you explain, perhaps I can do something for you. Is it ransom you want, or what is it?"

"Call it what you like, but it don't look like ransom to me when a man merely tries to get back what is coming to him. It's the money we want."

All at once I remembered the fragment of conversation I had overheard the day previous while Miss Arlington and I were hidden in the launch. Money had been referred to then, also.

"See here," I said, "do you think I, in some fashion, got hold of your money? Well, you're a fool if you think that. I never saw any of your money."

"Don't try that," snapped my captor, leaning over me, his face red with anger. "John Arlington didn't get away with it, and by ——, you won't! We got the girl. You bring every cent of the money coming to us and you can forget us, but I'm only giving you till tomorrow night. The girl ain't goin' to make any fuss, because she knows we get you if she does. Just because Arlington's dead don't save you, my buck!"

"How much is the amount?" I demanded.

"As tho you didn't know! I don't know where Arlington put it, but you do, and you'd better move about and get hold of it. I reckon you will get those knots loose after a little. Better get busy," and with that he went down the hill after the others, who were already gone from view.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE big pines swallowed him up after a little, as they had hidden the forms of Miss Arlington and her captors a few moments before. And in my heart was blackest despair. It would almost appear as if everything were lost. I was to bring a sum of money to the border of Shadow Lake where it joined the swamps, in order to free Miss Arlington. But what sum? As to that I had not the faintest idea, altho they had appeared to believe I knew all about it. And I had till the next evening to do it. John Arlington's name had been mentioned; it seemed as tho I was supposed to know his affairs. Upon that knowledge depended Miss Arlington's fate, and alas, I knew nothing that would help her! However, the first thing was to free myself.

Perhaps my captor had been more careful with his knots, or my dexterity at that sort of thing was less than that of the hero in stories I had read, I cannot say, but I remember well my feeling of despair as I tugged at the cruel knots that blocked my way to liberty. My wrists pained me somewhat, for the cord cut deep, and my efforts certainly did not tend to soothe the chafing, as I tugged carefully and then rapidly and finally frantically at the knots. And so passed some minutes. I realized I was not arriving anywhere by that method, and so paused to consider another.

There was a knife in my pocket, and I knew it would free me if only I could get hold of it. And then I knew a way. As my hands were bound behind me I could make little move to help myself, but after some time and a great deal of rolling about I got my feet against the fence, and then with much effort worked them higher on the rail till I was standing very nearly on my head. As a dignified pose it lacked much, but it had its advantages also, for I heard my watch and knife drop with a little thud, and an instant later my purse and a small shower of other objects.

Luckily for me it was one of those patent knives which open by merely pressing a button, and in a moment I was sawing slowly on the cord at my wrists, with the knife handle caught between my palms. In a few minutes I heard the cord go and felt the tension of the whole bond lessen, and then my hands were free. To cut the cord at my feet was the work of an instant, and I rose to my full height triumphantly. That much, at least, was done.

But the other affair was entirely a mystery. It had occurred to me that I might go to Wind Cave and take a car to the village and obtain a sum of money —but what sum? The price of Miss Arlington's freedom might be a vaster amount than I could command upon so short a notice, and without knowing I would be running a terrible risk. John Arlington's tragic return had shown me that this band of villains was not to be trifled with. And our experience the previous day in the swamp was still strong upon me.

I picked up my belongings which I had dropped when obtaining my knife, and turned toward the cottage. All at once, and for the first time, it occurred to me that Aunt Molly was missing. Until then she had escaped my memory completely. I wondered if she had been captured, also. I remembered the villains who had come from the rear of the cottage, and half suspected just that had occurred. In the excitement she might well have escaped my notice, and have been taken away unprotesting with her beloved mistress.

Inside the cottage, I turned into the little room to the left of the hall where the safe was, determined to learn, if possible, what John Arlington had known about this business. The safe stood against the south wall of the room, and I knelt beside it, with the sun making a short, bright shadow on the floor beside me. Referring to the numbers in the dead man's watch, I was not long over the combination. The first door disclosed a second, with the key protruding. I tried the lock, and I drew back open speedily. The compartment thus exposed was about two feet by a foot and a half, the upper part of which was occupied by three drawers of equal size. They opened readily, but contained nothing save unimportant papers, memoranda and the like. In the compartment beneath were a number of bills laid flat, and tied by a rubber band. I counted four hundred dollars. It had occurred to me that Arlington had mentioned a far larger sum than that, but of it there was no sign. Certainly this amount was not referred to by Miss Arlington's abductors. Even hardened outlaws would not take so great a risk for so small an amount. With a feeling of regret and something of despair, I closed the safe.

As I rose to my feet the sight of something white in the shadow beneath the safe caused me to drop to my knee once more. It was a linen envelope, sealed, and with the end torn open. One side of the circle of wax was gone and the broken edge showed slightly lighter than the surface. The envelope was entirely empty. That it had contained money I could not doubt, and even in bills of large denominations, quite an amount, for the edges of the paper were drawn, until the crease was hardly distinguishable, as tho it had contained something bulky.

And so I had to contend with a thief, also! Truly, there had never been such another adventure as this of mine! With a heavy heart I replaced the watch on the table and turned to the desk. Perhaps among the papers there I might find some clew. Certainly Arlington must have kept some account of his transactions, lawless or otherwise. Perhaps I could find some clew to the amount spoken of by my captor. Evidently it was known to Arlington, and the desk might reveal some written account of it.

Turning, I threw up the top, for it was not locked, and dropped into the chair before it. Everything was arranged neatly, and I searched the various compartments carefully, but to no purpose. There was a cash box, one of those sheet metal affairs with a small handle to admit carrying about, but it contained no money. The bank book was there, as Arlington had said. The amount to his credit was about five hundred dollars. Not a great amount, certainly. With the money in the safe Miss Arlington was facing the future with something less than a thousand dollars. Certainly not a bright outlook.

With a sigh I closed the desk finally and got to my feet, having learned nothing. My anxiety for Miss Arlington's safety was intense. How fully I realized that her escape depended upon my efforts, and how doubtful I was that I could render her any service! Having found nothing to help me at the cottage, I must try elsewhere. It occurred to me that I might go to the edge of the swamp and wait for some one of the gang to come and attempt to convince him of the fact that I was entirely ignorant of the whole affair. If he still demanded a large sum, I could obtain it, altho he should have to wait some days till I could arrange for it. It never occurred to me to resist. I feared the wrath of these scoundrels, and knew that the girl was entirely in their power, altho somehow I felt she was safe so long as I made no move to bother them.

As I thought the matter over, it seemed to me that I could account for Aunt Molly's disappearance, also. You will remember I noticed only three men at first, altho a fourth appeared a few moments later. The day before there had been five men in the colony. The negress had certainly made no outcry, but then neither had I when I was attacked in the boathouse. I had been drugged with chloroform. Was it not possible that the same fate had been hers? But then she was nowhere about; I was sure of that. It would almost appear as tho I were wrong—that she had gone freely with Miss Arlington.

But all this did not bring the girl any nearer freedom, nor did I see a way in which I might accomplish it. And then, momentarily, I forgot my black despair, started suddenly, faced about and caught my revolver from the table. Some one had quite suddenly crossed the veranda and entered the hall.

This thrilling story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

UNAPPRECIATED.

"Men," said Mrs. Wittance emphatically, "haven't the remnant idea of economy! They are naturally extravagant!"

Wittance snapped at the bait like a terrier at a rat. "There you go!" he cried. "With one of your offhand judgments that have no sensible foundation! Rank nonsense! I have just as good an idea of economy as you have!"

"You may have the idea," said Mrs. Wittance, with the crushing sweetness that is the privilege of wives, "but you have it tied up in pink ribbons and laid away in your sachet if you have! That's no good if it does you!"

Wittance began to turn purple and clinch the chair arms. "Just specify!" he insisted. "Just name one example—you can't do it!"

"I can," insisted Mrs. Wittance. "Any time you feel like hearing me run off a list of several dozen perfectly good examples, and I have a minute, don't feel it too to ask me to oblige you, because being agreeable is about the best thing I do.

"For instance," she went on, "a few minutes ago you made the remark that you must remember to buy yourself a new straw hat. You never stopped to wonder whether or not you had a straw hat left from last summer which would do to start out the season, did you?

"Now, a woman's first instinct when she needs anything is to wonder whether or not she has something laid away that would do, and so would save her from making a fresh purchase. What is past is past to a man, whether it is his last summer's clothes or a Presidential election. Now, as it happens, you bought a new straw hat just a few weeks before the season closed last year, and it is all right to wear. It may be necessary to have it cleaned——"

"There you are!" cried Wittance. "Do you think I'm going to travel downtown with a hat in a paper bag and waste good time hunting up a cleaner's and meantime lose a customer or so? That's a woman's idea of economy, all right!"

"If you're so fussy," said Mrs. Wittance, "I'll clean it for you myself. I can do it perfectly well with some acid. I used to do it when I wore sailor hats myself."

Wittance groaned. "It'll look homemade," he explained. "Something on the order of knitted wristlets and mitts! I don't like the idea!"

"You leave it to me!" said Mrs. Wittance sternly. "If you are so anxious to get rid of $5 just hand it over to me!"

So Mrs. Wittance scrubbed last summer's hat with acid. She was rather in a hurry because she wanted to get to a club meeting, and so she did not remove the band before she scrubbed it. She left it to dry with the consciousness of a deed well done, but when she got home she found to her horror that the black band was all splotched with dull orange where the acid had touched it. Wittance's arrival was simultaneous with hers, so he, too, saw the tragedy.

"I hope," he said severely, "that you now see the folly of trying to do the work of a professional who knows what he is about! I shall buy a new hat, for I wouldn't be caught dead wearing this thing!"

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" declared his wife. "There is my economy theory demonstrated again! I can buy a new corded ribbon for 50 cents or less and sew it on just like this one. Don't be so silly!"

Mrs. Wittance was determined to prove that she was sensible. So she went downtown the next day to buy the ribbon. When she got it sewed on she found it was a shade narrower than the old one, but the black was sufficient to display a little line of stain, black and orange, on the straw.

Wittance refused to argue the matter. "I will not wear that hat!" he stormed. "I shall buy a new one!"

"Nobody can see that little mark," persisted Mrs. Wittance. "You are extravagant, that's what you are!"

She laid the hat tenderly away in its box and put it on the shelf in the coat closet downstairs.

The next day Wittance paid $5 for a new hat and when he arrived home that afternoon and saw the box, he jerked it down and grabbed out the old straw hat in desperate fury. Tenderly depositing the new one in the box, for he is a neat man and dislikes dust, Wittance jammed the old straw into the ash can and raked ashes over it to hide it.

The next day the temperature had fallen 40 degrees and it was early for straw hats, anyhow, so Wittance wore his derby when he went downtown.

Mrs. Wittance had a resigned and injured expression at dinner that night.

"You made such a fuss over that straw hat I cleaned and fixed up for you," she informed him, "that I gave it away today. The collector for charity clothes called, and I handed the box over to him —so you needn't be troubled by it any longer. You didn't seem to appreciate my trying to save money—so the hat is gone."

"I should say it is gone!" yelled Wittance.

Cleverness.

"It makes me sick to have people tell me I'm clever," said the fat man, as he dropped into the seat beside the thin man. The 8:22 chugged impatiently out of the station toward the city.

"I don't getcha," returned the thin man.

"Well, it's this: I figure that a reputation for cleverness is a tribute wrung reluctantly from people who dislike you without being able to find an adequate reason. When you hear one man speak of another as clever you know that he really means that he thinks the other man will never amount to anything. And there may be something to it, because my experience is that to be clever is to indulge a vicious propensity to do things that don't bring in any money.

"Now, consider a woman, for instance. The minute a woman calls another woman clever she means that the clever creature is dangerous. The fact is, tho, that a girl who early in life shows signs of this so-called 'cleverness' will probably marry a ninny and most of his wages will be used for paying postage on poetry which the magazines return as unavailable. To maintain the boy who displays the fatal symptoms should be chloroformed. If not, he will learn to play the ukulele and then it will be too late.

"I'll leave it to you! Take the case of any clever young fellow you knew at school. What's he doing now? The chances are that he brings the ice around to the back door of your house every morning at 15 minutes after 10. Ask your cook. She knows him.

"Now, how about that other young fellow at school, the one who was the clever lad's chum—you know, the bonehead? Well, how about him? He owns the ice company, doesn't he? Or else he owns the bank that owns the ice company. Am I right?"

"I'm afraid there's a grain of truth in what you say," sighed the thin man.

"A grain of truth! Blessed are the jellyheads, for they shall make the money and be happy. And the clever—they shall inherit the bughouse!"

The thin man sighed again. "I can't dispute you. I think you've expressed my idea very cleverly."

The brakeman flung open the door, "Chicago! Remember your packages!"

When a man finally succeeds in putting his past to sleep he is always afraid some one will come along and wake it up.

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WIT WINS

By Will Gage Carey

ON THAT particular morning, I had entered Central Park, I recall, thru what is known as the Gate of All Saints, at Eighth avenue and Ninety-sixth street. A recent loss had been disturbing my customary tranquillity of mind; but this was gradually giving way, when I took a seat upon a bench a little to one side to let the natural beauty of the scene around me continue its soothing effect and influence.

Presently a man came and sat down upon the bench beside me. There was nothing about either his manner or attire to give offense; and yet, for some subtle, unexplainable cause, I took an instant dislike to him.

I endeavored to center my thoughts and attention upon the landscape again, the trees, shrubbery and the symmetry of the winding drives; no use. My gaze kept reverting back to the individual by my side. I noticed that his hands were slender and very white; that his vest was of different pattern from that of his coat and slightly baggy trousers; that in lacing up his shoes he had not made use of all the eye-holes near the top. These things I noticed, I presumed, thru sheer mental perversity; for, as I say, I had taken a dislike to him, and certainly wished to give him no further thought.

He took a coin from his pocket, turned it over a number of times in his hand, and examined it minutely. Then he turned to me, with the observation:

"Have you seen the new Buffalo quarters?"

Not wishing to appear uncivil, I answered him: "No, I have not. I have seen the new dimes; and, of course the buffalo nickels. I have not seen—nor, for that matter, heard—of the new buffalo quarters."

He chuckled rancorously.

"Well, then," he answered, "walk around by the Zoo—and you'll see the new buffalo quarters!"

I was taken aback by the impertinence of this stranger; the expression of my face must have shown as much, for as his little beady eyes fell upon me now he laughed out more boisterously than ever.

"If you are attempting to jest," I remarked, "I can only say that this sample of your wit is not to my liking; you had best reserve it for another time and occasion."

He ceased laughing at once.

"No offense, ol' timer," he said, with an effort to be gracious, "the joke, I'll admit, is not the best in the world, perhaps; but it served its purpose, I hope."

"And 'its purpose'?"

"Merely to pass the time—and to further our acquaintance. By the way, have you the time with you?"

Thru force of habit, I presume, I started to reach for my watch; then, catching myself, I said: "No, I have not the time with me."

"Good! Glad to hear it," he responded genially.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this——" he reached in his pocket, and brought forth a fine gold watch—"I want to sell you this timepiece—and at a bargain!"

I had hardly thought my appearance was such that I would be singled out by a stranger, in Central Park, for the purpose of any such transaction as this individual now seemed to have in mind. At first, I can say positively, I had not the slightest intention of buying the watch from him; but something about it attracted me strangely. I reached over and took it from him, and began examining it carefully.

"Well—how about it?" he asked brusquely.

"It seems to be a very good watch," I answered.

"Sure it is! A twenty-one jewel: and the best make——"

"How much do you want for it?"

"Thirty-five dollars."

I started to hand it back.

"Twenty-five!" he said, quickly.

By this time, tho affecting indifference, I had fully decided to retain possession of that watch, cost what it might. I would gladly have paid over the money he first asked for it, if necessary.

"You know a watch when you see it!" he went on persuasively. "That's why I made the offer to you; it's worth a hundred dollars——"

"It has the letter M engraved on the back of the case," I observed.

"Yes; that won't make any difference to you; it's a timepiece you need; and that watch'll keep time to a second!"

I drew forth a roll of bills; a gleam of expectancy shone in his beady eyes; I replaced the bills in my pocket.

"Where did you get this watch?" I asked.

Disappointed that the deal had not reached the immediate culmination he had been led to hope for, he responded hurriedly: "Oh, that's all right; I didn't get it the way you seem to think I might have got it."

"No?"

"Decidedly not; I am no common 'dip'."

"How did you get the watch?" I repeated.

For a moment he hesitated; then, partly in bravado, partly in his eagerness to get the matter over, he said hurriedly: "A moment ago you spoke somewhat slightingly of my wit——"

"Well?"

"I got that watch by my wits."

"Go on."

"I saw an 'ad' in the Herald; here it is." He handed me a little clipping from the Lost and Found column. It read:

"Lost—Open-face watch; twenty-one jewel Hamilton movement; small diamond set in back of case; engraved with letter M. Reward if returned to Park Hotel. Ask for Mr. Mallory."

I handed the clipping back to him.

"Well, I was up against it," he went on, quickly. "I saw that 'ad' in the Herald; I put in each of the other city papers an 'ad' almost similar, but with a different address and name, of course. To make it short, the watch was returned to me. I paid a small reward; that's what my wits did for me, for I got the watch dirt cheap, see? And now's your chance to get a bargain. I'm a judge of men. If I hadn't have been, I wouldn't have confided all this to you. I know you're square, and will deal square with me; so I told you the straight of it—instead of making up some cock-and-bull story about it. Now, how about it, friend; will you take this watch at twenty-five?"

At that moment I saw a friend of mine approaching—Officer Burns, of the Central Park Station. As he came up to us he bowed, and said politely: "Good mornin', Mr. Mallory; an' how are yez today?"

The man beside me stirred uneasily.

"Mallory?" he gasped, feebly. "You ain't—ain't——"

"Yes, I am Mr. Mallory," I answered, placidly, "the man who put the 'ad' in the Herald concerning a lost watch, set with a diamond and engraved with the letter M."

Five minutes later the policeman was escorting away the gentleman who had endeavored to sell to me my own watch.

"By the way," I called out after him, cheerily, "have you seen the new police quarters? No? Well—Officer Burns will show you."

* * *

Awful Garments.

"It is the first duty of the hostess," declared the etiquette teacher to her class of debutantes, "to make guests feel comfortable and at ease."

"Then you don't want to introduce any young men to women in overalls," responded the class cutup.

"Women in overalls—introduced—to men!" gasped the teacher of etiquette.

"Women have no business in overalls," declared the teacher's pet.

"They aren't feminine!" declared the tall, skinny student. "They are masculine."

"Not necessarily," declared the peacemaker. "They have a special kind, you know, made especially for women."

"Well," retorted the skinny student, "none of the ones I saw were made especially for the women I saw in them, and they were decidedly masculine."

"It seems to me," snipped the stuckup student, "that they are common."

"Well, masculine, feminine, common or neuter, they are no good as garments in which to be introduced to men!" declared the class cutup. "I know, because I had invited a lot Sunday and was working in the garden when that idiotic big brother of mine saw fit to bring a young man guest to dinner. The first thing he did was to take the young man out to see the garden where I, arrayed in my gardening garb, was engaged in tillage.

"They didn't see me until I straightened up suddenly, and then they took one look. They were like jack rabbits, too scared even to run."

"Hello, nut!' I said, addressing my brother in the usual way.

"But he didn't seem to hear me. He only stared and muttered some meaningless thing like 'Well, I'll be darned!' and he never made a move.

"Finally I said, 'Can't you introduce your friend?' and at that he managed to say something about my being his sister, and I stepped forward and extended my hand. The young man took his hand out of his pocket and sort of groped for mine with his eyes fastened on the distant prospect, and he got thru with it some way. But as soon as it was over they stumbled over each other getting away.

"My, it was a painful experience for those two men!"

At this point the teacher of etiquette, who had been speechless for some minutes, remained speechless.

* * *

Unanimous.

"Who stood up for Jack when he married Miss Fitzeigh?"

"No one, Everybody called him a fool."

YOU AND TODAY.

With every rising of the sun
Think of your life as just begun.

The past has shrived, and buried deep,
All yesterdays; there let them sleep.

Nor seek to summon back one ghost
Of that innumerable host.

Concern yourself with but today.
Woo it, and teach it to obey

Your will and wish. Since time began,
Today has been the friend of man;

But in his blindness and his sorrow,
He looks to yesterday and tomorrow.

You, and today! a soul sublime.
And the great pregnant hour of time.

With God Himself to bind the twain!
Go forth, I say—attain, attain!

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

* * *

SUITABLE.

"Good morning, Mrs. Hubbard," said the next-door neighbor from her back porch. "I see you have your curtains down. Are you going to move?"

"No, indeed," was the emphatic reply. "I've begun housecleaning." She fluttered a white tablecloth over the porch railing and allowed the breakfast crumbs to fall on the sodden grass below. "I've no patience with people that move every year, just for the sake of moving. It's surprising how many do that very thing. I've seen so many looking at flats this spring. I've looked at a good many myself. I think it's a woman's duty to keep informed on the subject of flats, since she passes most of her time in one.

"Whenever I go into a flat that's occupied I always ask the tenant why she's leaving. Almost invariably it's because she has been seized with the moving fever, simply because her neighbors are moving, or maybe because she's seen another flat that she covets. We moved last year and the year before that and many times besides, but it was my husband's doing, not mine."

"Your husband never struck me as being one of the dissatisfied kind," the neighbor commented.

"Mr. Hubbard wouldn't be the man he is, Mrs. Atkins, if he hadn't a wife who understands him thoroly," Mrs. Hubbard answered with dignity.

"As I said, we moved last year solely on Mr. Hubbard's account. He has always been crazy to keep a dog, and last spring he was crazier than ever on the subject. He made arrangements to secure a puppy from a friend. I didn't say outright: 'No, sir, you can't bring a dog into my flat.' Instead, I suggested that he needed a more convenient darkroom for developing his pictures—photography is another of his hobbies. Then I made it my business to find a flat where the landlord wouldn't allow dogs. Mr. Hubbard is so pleased with his darkroom in this flat that he says he never wants to move again, and I'm sure that I don't."

"I wish I felt that way," Mrs. Atkins sighed. "I want to move. There's a beautiful building going up on the boulevard, and the second apartment on the corner facing south is just to my liking. But Mr. Atkins won't move. He's never had the moving fever."

"I quite sympathize with your husband, Mrs. Atkins, I know exactly how he feels, poor man. I trust that you are patient with him. Did you say that you had been thru the flats in the new building on the boulevard?"

"Yes; I was passing yesterday afternoon and I couldn't resist the temptation to arrange our furniture, in my mind's eye, in that lovely apartment on the corner."

"I think I'll step over and see it," Mrs. Hubbard said, thoughtfully. "As I told you a moment ago, I consider it a woman's duty to keep herself informed on the subject of flats. I promised to go out to my sister's this afternoon and look at a flat near her home; it's quite a trip to take, especially when I'm cleaning house, but I feel it my duty to go."

"Well, I wouldn't waste my time looking at flats if I'd no idea of moving," declared Mrs. Atkins.

"But you looked at those on the boulevard yesterday," Mrs. Hubbard retorted quickly, tilting her head. "Of course, my dear, you and I see the matter from different points of view. I believe in keeping myself informed on important subjects of the day."

"It depends somewhat upon what you call important subjects," Mrs. Atkins commented thoughtfully. "I suppose looking at occupied flats is one way of informing one's self about other people's affairs, and it helps to pass the time."

"There are women who do that; I've met them," Mrs. Hubbard replied with conviction. "There's my bell; it's probably the man for the rugs. They are too good to be cleaned at home. I quite envied you last week when I saw a man beating your rugs in the yard—so much less responsibility, you know."

Saturday afternoon when Mrs. Atkins walked down the boulevard she looked longingly at the new apartment building. As she passed the door her neighbors, the Hubbards, emerged.

Mrs. Atkins observed smilingly to Mrs. Hubbard: "Been informing yourself some more?"

Mrs. Hubbard nodded her head delightedly. "It's all that you claimed for it," she declared. "My husband feels that he's just got to have that beautiful expanse of wall in the living-room for his photographs. Don't you, dear?"

"The wall is all right enough," Hubbard said, a bit reluctantly, "but surely you're not serious about pulling up stakes again, Fanny?" he added.

"Why, Dick, the rugs and the curtains have gone to be cleaned, and the rest won't be any trouble at all to move, so long as you are pleased, dear boy," Mrs. Hubbard cried, with loving reproach. "We'll move next week. I can't sleep till I've seen your beautiful pictures on that big, nice wall."

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Distracting Her Attention.

"I'll get a terrible scolding for coming home so late."

"You don't know how to manage a wife. Do something to distract her attention."

"What can I do?"

"I generally leave the corner of a five-dollar bill sticking out of my vest pocket."

HAVE A CARE!

"I do not care a button."
Is a thoughtless thing to say,
For buttons now,
I will avow,
Are precious, in their way.

No, don't abuse the button
Or treat it with contempt,
For things like that,
I tell you flat,
From malice aren't exempt.

You lose a collar button,
Say "Darn!" or something worse;
The blamed thing hides—
In it abides
"The imp of the perverse."

Suppose that every button
(And in them demons lurk),
Should fly away
Some night. Next day
No one could go to work!

So honor well the button;
We owe it gratitude.
Without it we
Should savage be
And altogether nude!

Great Expectations.

She—"Jack is paying Miss Golden marked attention. He hasn't any money, has he?"

He—"No, but he has great expectations."

She—"From whom?"

He—"From her father."

Her Curiosity Aroused.

Phoebe was bored. In all the six long years of her life she had never spent such a miserable day. Circumstances at last grew too strong for her, and she cried. She was one of those who do not often cry, but who, when they do, make no secret of it. In short, Phoebe nearly lifted the nursery ceiling off.

Upstairs came Phoebe's mother, already dressed in her smartest clothes ready to have tea with a friend.

"Why, what's the matter, Phoebe?" she asked.

Phoebe, standing hopelessly in the middle of the nursery, only howled the louder, and refused to see anything cheerful about life.

Lifting the unhappy child up in her arms and cuddling the tearstained little face against her own, the mother walked over to the mirror.

"Just look, Phoebe, at that ugly little face in the looking-glass!"

Phoebe immediately became interested and stopped crying.

"Which one, mother?" she asked.

Desdemona—"You say your enemy forced you over the edge of a cliff a thousand feet high with jagged rocks below. How did you escape?"

Othello—"Just before I hit the rocks I woke up."

Never Suffered in One Way.

The lady lecturer had got her second wind. She was going strong.

"Yes," she cried, waving her arms, "women have been wronged for ages. They have suffered in a thousand ways."

She paused to let this momentous statement sink in.

"There's one way in which they have never suffered," breathed a meek little man.

The lady lecturer fixed him with a baleful eye.

"And what way is that?" she hissed.

"They have never suffered in silence."

Privileges of Old Acquaintances.

An old lady who had been introduced to a doctor, who was a professor in a university, felt somewhat puzzled as to how she would address the great man.

"Shall I call you 'Doctor' or 'professor'?" she asked.

"Oh! just as you wish," was the reply; "as a matter of fact some people call me an old idiot."

"Indeed," she said, sweetly, "but, then, they are people that know you."

He Knew Him.

"You don't seem to have any faith in that man's word," said one lawyer to another.

"No, I do not,"—was the reply.

"Why?"

"Because I was his attorney in a horse trading case once."

Don't you remember ase colic, Ben Bolt,
And the way your whole soul did recoil,
When about two o'clock, ma gave you a shock,
By appearing with more castor oil?

Met His Match.

He was one of those officious foremen; one who tried to make those under his charge realize that he was somebody of importance. But one day he met his match. Stepping up to the shop humorist he said:

"You're a minute late this morning."

"I know; but there's a reason."

"Explain."

"When I was coming along to work I heard a man in the river yellin' for help. I ran to him, was pullin' him out, but let him drop in again."

"But why didn't you save him?"

"Not likely," was the dry answer. "Why?"

"'Cos he was a foreman."

A Bucolic Joke.

"Thought you said there was a fine stream around here," complained the prospective summer boarder.

"Shore is," declared Farmer Hoptoad. "The druggist has got one onto his soda founting."

Forne.

"M grocery bill last month very charming young lady hailed a four-fairly took my breath away."

"Mine did worse than that. It took all my cash."

He Wonders.

"Society is shallow."

"I hear that so often that I wonder why anybody wants to get into the swim."

Only Way.

"What is the best way to make a woman keep a secret?"

"Give her chloroform."

Misunderstood.

A few days ago a well-dressed and wheeler, there being no taxi in sight. Just as she was getting in she noticed that the horse seemed inclined to be frisky.

He was jumping about, and swishing his tail in a way that alarmed her; she was a timid little thing.

So she addressed a few words to the ancient Jehu.

"I hope," she said, smiling bravely, "that you will not run away with me."

The cabby sighed mournfully.

"No, mum," he replied, "I have a wife and seven kids at home already!"

He Wondered.

Mr. Styles—"What do you wear those hatpins for?"

Mrs. Styles—"To keep my hat from blowing off."

"Yes, but what prevents your hair from blowing off and taking the hat and the pins with it?"

Hereditary.

"That boy will be the death of me some day," declared the head of the family. "I am sure I don't know where he gets all his impudence and self-assurance; surely not from me. He returned home from school the other day to spend the holidays, as I supposed, and, entering my office, he threw his hat on the floor, selected an easy chair, put his feet on my desk, lit a cigarette, inhaled a few puffs and then, turning languidly to me, he drawled:

"I say, dad, do you remember the time you were expelled from school?"

"I did. There was no use denying it, for one day, in a burst of confidence, I had told him of my escapades as a boy, and lived to regret that I had been so indiscreet.

"'Well,'" said he, 'history has repeated itself.'

"'What do you mean, you young rascal?' I roared.

"'Oh,' said he, easily, 'I've been expelled, too. Astonishing, isn't it, dad, how such things will run in a family?'"

Woman—"Here is some bread and butter, creamed chicken, chocolate cake and a glass of water."

Tramp—"Never mind de water, mum. Water is fattening and I'm trying to reduce."

Forgot His Key.

It was very late when Mr. Bings came home. To his great annoyance he found that he had forgotten his latchkey and was obliged to ring the bell.

Mrs. Bings opened the window.

"Who's there?" she inquired.

"It's me, love!" said Bings.

"Where have you been, at this time of night?"

"I've been sitting up with a sick friend, my dear."

"Oh, you have, have you?" snorted Mrs. Bings. "Well, you'd better go right back to him. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to desert him at this hour."

Then she slammed the window down and retired.

A Manly Man.

"What is your definition, Miss Mabel, of a manly man?" he asked.

Miss Mabel looked at him coldly. The clock struck eleven. She hid a yawn behind her hand and said:

"My definition of a manly man, Mr. Skinner, is a chap who doesn't stay on and on and on just because he knows the girl isn't strong enough to throw him out."

He Explains.

"You were mumbling in your sleep about Augusta. Now, who is this Augusta?"

"A city, my dear. I may have to go there on a business trip."

IT DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT.

It really is very droll:
Ten miles of roadway smooth and flat
Beneath our flying car may roll,
No word of praise; at last, a hole—
Aha! Oho! We notice that!

Thru fifty years of married life
A pair may go without a spat;
We scarcely look at man or wife,
But let there show a shade of strife—
Aha! Oho! We notice that!

Our neighbor drudges day by day,
At evening smokes within his flat;
He's but a dismal dog, we say;
He has a fight and runs away—
Aha! Oho! We notice that!

Now, let some diamond artist pound
The pill .300 with his bat
Or swing a winning homer round,
Say, once a week—oh, joyful sound!—
Aha! Oho! We notice that!

In baseball one good, clever play
Pins many errors to the mat;
But is it so in life? Oh, nay!
We boost the jinx the livelong day—
Aha! Oho! We notice that!

Fifty-fifty.

"I desire no remuneration for this poem," remarked the long-haired individual. "I merely submit it as a compliment."

"Then, my dear sir, permit me to return the compliment," replied the editor, with true journalistic courtesy.—Judge.

Bill Bug—"This is Congress, you say?" Jim Bug—"Yes, upper and lower houses."

Had to Say Something.

Jack Timid (presumptuously in love with his employer's daughter)—"Is Mr. Cashleigh in?"

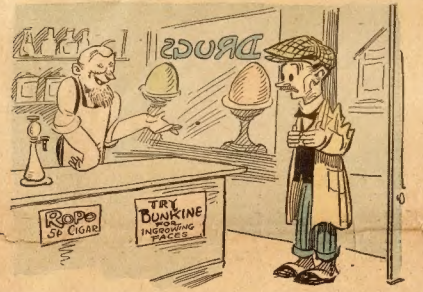
Butler—"Yes, sir."

Jack Timid (horribly disappointed)—"Well, I'm glad to hear it. He might catch cold outside—beastly weather. Good night."

Perils of Modern Life.

Mr. Beetle—"I hear Mrs. Apple Worm's life is despaired of."

Miss June Bug—"Yes, poor dear! She contracted double pneumonia when they were living in cold storage."—Judge.



Stranger—"Who is the nearest doctor?"

Country Druggist—"Doc Jones. But, say, if you're as sick as you look you had best build up your constitution with a bottle of this sarsaparilla before exposing it to the ravages of Doc Jones."

Mean Insinuation.

Miss Fluff—"Mr. Gump hasn't got a bit of tact."

Miss Flip—"How do you know he hasn't?"

Miss Fluff—"I heard him ask Miss Prim the other day if she wasn't interested in the prehistoric age."

Considerate Judge.

Magistrate (to talkative prisoner)—"Now, what have you got to say?"

Prisoner—"I've a good deal to say, guvnor, if you'll only give me time to say it."

Magistrate—"Certainly. Six months."

Scientific Invective.

"Did you call that contemporary a low-brow and a bonehead?"

"Yes, I did," answered Senator Sorghum.

"He resents the insult."

"That was no insult. That was a diagnosis."

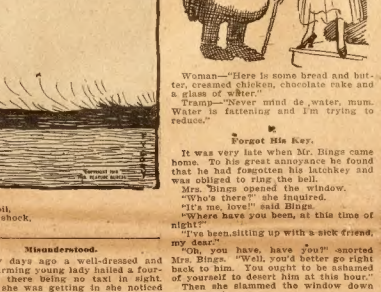
Encouraging.

Cautious Piscatorial Enthusiast—"My man, is this public water?"

Native—"Yes."

"Then it won't be a crime if I land a fish?"

Native—"No; it'll be a miracle!"



"What a man doesn't know won't hurt him."

"Suppose he doesn't know the difference between a toadstool and a mushroom?"

Lost the Election.

Bounderby was a most respected resident of our suburb, and made friends with everybody. As he was putting up for the borough council, he made a tour of the various municipal establishments, including the local police station.

The superintendent had treated him with great courtesy, and had shown him everything of interest, on which Bounderby dilated when he reached home.

Next day he was taking his little son for a ride on the trolley car, which was crowded with local residents.

As the car was passing the police station a shrill voice suddenly cried:

"Oo, dad! Is that the police station where the policeman took you last night?"

Every person on the car turned to stare at Bounderby—and he was not elected to the council!

The Unanswerable Argument.

Billy was about to be married, and his friends—married friends—were giving him good advice, the burden of which was "Forget it!"

But Billy was not to be dissuaded.

"Oh, I don't know!" he replied. "Marriage is all right if you take it in the right way. Now all this talk about matrimonial quarrels, arguments, and so on is all nonsense. Surely you can accept one another's point of view! And, anyway, there's always an answer to every argument."

"Oh, is there?" growled the old married man. "I tell you, my boy, there's one argument in married life that you'll never be able to answer."

"Really! And what's that?"

"Why, when your wife says: 'If the Browns can afford it, we can!' You try to find an answer to that!"

WHAT (NOT) TO SEND TO SOLDIERS

Almost every soldier likes a gun. Send him this beautiful umbrella model it will tickle him pink.

This Oysterstewer mattress will prove its worth either by day or night. Send him one.

Lawn swings are particularly filling and very restful for soldiers after a battle. Take the hint.

A cut-glass flower vase will add attractiveness to an otherwise dirty business. Also rat traps are useful.

The above loose-leaf ledger is indispensable in keeping a soldier's finances straight, and a silver napkin-ring is useful to keep gun rags in.

The Hilltop Thieves

By Mason Ray

IN THE foothill meadow fat Mrs. McSween angrily eyed a Holstein cow whose usually abundant flow of milk had miraculously diminished. Near her flaming hills rimmed the sky before they sloped to the valley highway; but she saw neither autumn-dyed woods nor lush meadow. With the empty pail in her fat hand she glared at the cow's shrunken udder and throatily voiced her anger.

"The outrageous rogue'" she scolded. "The pestiferous thief!"

Her eyes gleamed like twin coals as she turned from the arid beast and hurried down the emerald grade to the barn where her husband directed the work of silo fillers.

"Sime," she wheezed, "Ed's up and stole the milk! Ole Bess is dry!"

Her husband, a pikestaff of a man, eyed her vacantly.

"Ole Bess is what?" he demanded.

"Dry!" repeated his wife. "Ed's milked her!"

This time Sime grasped the situation. "Now, if 'twas the cow," said he, "you might worry. But what's a milkin'? The cow's left whole an' sound, ain't she?"

"If 'twas only milk!" Hannah reminded him.

Her festering mind raced over months of Ed McSween's astounding thefts. Ever since Sime and Martin inherited the McSween estate, and Ed, the thriftless, received nothing, he had impartially stolen from the two favored brothers. Drunk or sober, he resented being left out of his father's will, and instituted a campaign of reimbursement.

During winter while he worked in lumber camps, unattached property on the adjacent farms was safe. Then, after his coming-out spree, he camped on the hills and lived by his wits. Nothing disappeared from neighboring farms; but the McSween brothers lost everything Ed deemed desirable. Guns from Sime's wall rack, quilts airing on Hannah's line, butter from Mart's spring house, canned fruit from Mary McSween's cellar, hens and eggs and vegetables departed in the night. The brothers thus burglarized said nothing because of family pride. And they did nothing in retaliation, fearing Ed might burn them out. If goaded to it he might drop a flaming match in a haymow, and return, undetected, to the fire-lighted hills. Ed was free as air to work his immoral will.

"He orter be jailed!" flung back Hannah, and hastened to her kitchen and supper getting.

In the lean-to addition, which was lower than the dingy upright, she found Mary McSween hovering over the cookstove fire.

"I've been waiting while you'd milk," she greeted her sister-in-law. Her lifted face was haggard. Her gaunt frame sagged. Bony hands lay inert on her faded dress. "I come over to talk 'bout Tressie. Seems like I'd die if I couldn't unburden, an' Mart won't hear her name. He's bitter at the disgrace. But, disgrace or no disgrace, I want her back. Nights I think of her among strangers—and suffering, maybe dead. But, dead or living, I want my girl; an' just now a plan to find her popped in my head like angels sent it. See," said she, dragging from her pocket a card photo, it showed a younger edition of herself when her blue eyes were laughter-filled and the left cheek dimpled. "That's Tressie's last picter," she stated, "and I'm going to have it printed. I'm going to have it put in a city paper so's folks'll see it and maybe send me word."

Anxiously she awaited Hannah's opinion of the plan; but her sister-in-law was noisily filling a pan with potatoes, which she presently sat down to peel.

"'Twan't hurt to try," she finally forced herself to say. Then she spoke her mind. "It's a pity," said she, "that the Lord didn't send you all boys same's mine 'stead o' givin you a daughter to fret over." After that she spoke of her own grievance. "Ed's stealing again," she reported. "Milked old Bess."

And took our hunk o' bacon," said Mary, deserting the subject she came to discuss as Hannah intended she should. Her voice dropped to a frightened whisper. "Mart says next time Ed thieves from us he'll shoot—an' shoot to kill." Her eyes sought Hannah's and saw there reflected her own anxiety.

"The fool, the ignorant, hot-tempered fool!" ejaculated Sime McSween's decisive wife. "He mustn't do that. Killing's worse for Mart than Ed. It means the penitentiary for a man what ain't young, and nobody left home fit to work the farm. If that's his idea we got to stop him. Some way or other we got to keep them two gunshot apart."

After Mary hastened back to her neglected work, and while the potatoes boiled, Hannah thought out the problem of Tressie. Would a published photograph assist in finding her? She believed the expense useless. In her heart of hearts she believed the girl was dead, else she'd have communicated with her heartbroken mother. It was a bad business.

Tressie, the pride of both McSween families, had defied her father's will and run away to marry gay, penniless Jim Prescott. And Jim, whose erratic earnings had merely veneered him with fine clothes, took fright at the double expense incurred by marriage. At a time when his child bride most needed his devotion and cash he bolted—left her with a ticket for home and the brutal truth that she was deserted. What the girl suffered no one ever knew; but worse was to come.

When she reached her father's dwelling and asked refuge, Martin McSween, enraged at his daughter's disobedience and its result, drove her forth. He bade her begone from his sight, and never to darken his door or call him father. It was night, black and moonless, and into its murk slipped Tressie. Her mother called, but was dragged back and the door slammed. Later not a trace of the wanderer could be found. She had neither returned to her local town nor left the place by stage or hired a conveyance. But she was gone, and no word came back. Now, the mother, who had exhausted the usual means of seeking her beloved, was about to try a new plan.

"Nothing'll come of it," decided Hannah, as she finished setting the long oil-cloth-covered table. "Tressie's got lots o' her dad's spunk, and it's either drove her far, or——"

The grim alternative was thrust back in her subconscious mind as the workmen and her three sons gathered about the steaming supper. Then came the piled sink of dishes to be washed, and in the midst of them Mary, gaunt and white, reappeared in the low-ceiled room.

"Mart's loading the gun," she gasped. "I tell you he means every word of that threat. If Ed comes out of the woods tonight, it means trouble for all of us. It means murder. What'll we do?"

Hannah's opinion of Martin burst from her tongue.

"He's stark mad!" she cried. "He's worse 'en Ed. As if the family ain't scandalized enough 'thout bloodshed!" She sat down heavily in the nearest chair, dishrag in hand, and considered.

"Ed won't budge tonight," she said finally. "It's clear, an' the moon'll light up light day. He won't risk it. Besides, he stocked up; sure's not he ain't prowl for a week. By that time——"

The unspoken words would have greatly astonished her weak-willed sister-in-law. They would have expressed her intention of interviewing Ed, the renegade, and warning him. Not one of the McSweens ever sought Ed's lair on the hills, if her intention leaked out, Sime would remember his stolen guns and fear for her life; so she bit the sentence midway and began to talk of Tressie. Before Mary returned to her unwashed dishes the two women composed a letter that was to accompany Tressie's picture to the big newspaper. Lest Mart discover what was afoot, it was mailed in Sime's rural box and the tin flag uplifted to announce its presence.

It was late afternoon of the next day before Hannah found time to seek the family's black sheep. Darkly clad in navy blue gingham, she wheezed up the meadow slopes toward autumn-dyed hills. She meant her movements to be stealthy, but her huge, lumbering form rivaled the bulk of a grizzly, and was far less agile. Her big face crimsoned with exercise, while she rounded an encroaching spur of woodland and gazed speculatively at the distant heights. Somewhere on the crest Ed burrowed like an animal. But where? Hunting the night prowler would be like searching for the needle in a haystack; but she determined to find and warn him of Mart's murderous design. If any one in the family was to murder and suffer the penalty, let it be Ed, not Mary's husband. As she thought this out, a wooded alcove opened at her right. It was a leaf-walled room; and in its center she saw that which made her shriek in anger.

"Milkin' ole Bess a'grin!" she screamed "You black devil!"

Ed McSween, squatting beside the Holstein and milking into a battered pail, gave one look and sprang to his feet. His deep-sunken eyes were wide with astonishment. In a fleeting instant, when breathlessness prevented speech, Hannah stared at the thief's lean, swarthy face, his bony height, the talon-like fingers that grasped the pail. Then he darted into the underbrush and was gone. She had wasted the moments and was too indignant to care. Presently she drove old Bess down to the milking lot, secured a receptacle and finished Ed's uncompleted task.

Before the week ended Mary McSween received a copy of the big newspaper that had reproduced Tressie's winsome face. Beneath the picture was printed the McSween address and Mary's pitiful letter. Portrait and letter chanced to make excellent filler at a time when news was scarce. So they had featured both and mailed the donor one of the wonderful prints.

"It looks fit to speak," admitted Hannah across the steam of her kettle of pears. "Who knows, maybe her bonny face will soften hearts an' make friends we never saw. Anyway, 'tain't likely no harm." The two discussed possibilities while Hannah filled her waiting jars and screwed on the tops. Then she disclosed Ed McSween's latest burglary.

"That rapscallion swiped my Bartletts," was her manner of complaint. "Took the best, an' I'm canning the leavings."

"And lifted honey from our hives in spite o' Mart," Mary added. Her lowered tone expressed pent-up anxiety. "You see he's at his old tricks. And Mart's fair frothing at the mouth. His temper's at the worst, an' his gun's loaded What's to be done?"

Thru Hannah's alert mind raced ideas for thwarting Mart's murderous design. They might appeal to Sime; but she knew Sime. His bland indifference could never be roused to action. His disbelief in evil was part of him. He'd call her story imaginings. And the boys of both the McSween households were too young for such deadly business. They must be kept in ignorance of Mart's night watch. Worst of all, clouds and a waning moon gave him a terrible advantage at a time Ed was sure to make reprisals. At last a suitable scheme took form. It was the only way out, and it meant discomfort and rheumatism and several sorts of deception. She determined herself to share Mart's night vigil!

"Don't you worry a mite," was all she comforted her distressed relative. "Ed's got a gun, too, an' knows which way to point. He ain't so easy. You go to bed and quit fretting!"

So the burden shifted to Hannah's fat shoulders, and she later paved the way. A self-rung message on the telephone called her to a sick neighbor. Sime never doubted. Any pretext suffices for a man who accepted his wife's word as gospel. So, clad in a flannel wrapper and provided with shawls, the guardian of peace started on her mission. She was to be met by a fictitious horse, buggy and driver, so she escaped unattended into the stygian night. At Mart's gate she paused to peer in the uncurtained window and make sure her co-watcher still read his evening paper by the kerosene lamp. It was as she planned, and the two boys bent over some absorbing game.

"Be still, Bose," she commanded the house dog that fawned at her feet as she opened the gate; and he, recalling luscious bones, merely groveled and licked her fat hand.

After that, selecting a hiding-place troubled her. She was fastidious. The cow barn was filthy. A grape arbor was damp. She decided to try the lee side of a straw stack. Plenty of odorous roughage covered the ground. It formed a luxurious nook. She ponderously settled herself and began to alert herself for suspicious sounds. Nearby crickets chirped; distant frogs boomed; neighboring cattle tinkled musical bells; Bose settled at her side and snored. And presently Hannah accompanied him. She slept deeply and peacefully. A day of pear canning and a straw bed induced somnolence. Nothing disturbed her, and at dawn she awoke. She had slept on guard, and her watch availed nothing. Disgusted at her stupidity, she stiffly got on her feet and ambled home. Sime was just lighting the kitchen fire.

"Miz Anson better?" he asked.

"Anyhow, I'm going again tonight," evaded his wife. "Just to make sure," she added.

After the early breakfast she had Phil and small Jack harvest the Concord grapes, and then set about a day of jelly making. When the rural mail carrier passed at four o'clock, many rich red glasses of thickened juice sat in even ranks on the work table. She was about to melt paraffin for the final act of sealing, when Mary McSween rushed into the room and extended two letters with opened envelopes.

"They're from folks that've seen my Tressie!" she gasped.

Then her shaking limbs refused office, and she sank into the nearest chair. Her usually dim eyes burned in a face what was blanched with excitement and her thin hands trembled.

"Seen Tressie!" cried Hannah. She wiped her toil-heated face, adjusted spectacles that lay at hand on the window ledge, and sat down to peruse the missives. She was finishing the second before she made comment. Then she gave a grunt of contempt

"Umph!" said she. "Long-sighted folks, these be. Live in different States and seen her the same day. Want you to send money for her fare back home. Pretty cool, that, I'd say. Regular skin game."

"Don't say that!" implored Tressie's mother. "They must sure 've seen her, or they wouldn't write."

"Well, they did write," grimly commented Hannah. "An' lots more'll write by tomorrow's mail. You'll see."

Mary was but half convinced. Hope dies hard. But her money was safe, since she had less than half the sums named. After a time she wearily dragged herself home, leaving her portly and determined sister-in-law to make preparations for the second night as sentinel.

Exactly as before she sought a vantage point, while her bloodthirsty brother by marriage still busied himself with the daily news. If discovered at that hour she could improvise a plausible errand. Bose, meeting her, this time led rather than followed to her former night's lodging. But she kept awake while the dog slept.

Something magnetic in the air made her restless. Uneasily she peered about, but everything seemed as usual. The night chorus pulsed in the black atmosphere, but nothing stirred until she heard a new sound. It was Martin, gun in hand, going on watch. He passed near enough to have prodded her with the rifle, had he turned his head. Bose rose and followed a few paces, but returned to his warmed bed of straw. Hannah's straining eyes noted that his shape merged into the orchard. After that she sat upright against the stack, alert and nervous. Shortly after Martin disappeared she shut her teeth on a shriek, as a tall form confronted her from around the stack and a cautious voice whispered:

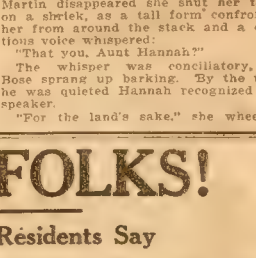
"That you, Aunt Hannah?"

The whisper was conciliatory, but Bose sprang up barking. By the time he was quieted Hannah recognized the speaker.

"For the land's sake," she wheezed.

HOME FOLKS!

What Illinois Residents Say



MRS. LUELLA SANDERS.

Mrs. Pearl Correia, of 529 North 6th St., East St. Louis, Ill., says: "I can say that Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery has been used by our family for three generations. My grandmother used it when living in the country near here. Mother used it for a run-down condition and cough, and it strengthened her and built her up after she was exhausted from waiting on the sick. I have used it myself after having La Grippe and found it a true builder. We thoroughly believe in 'Golden Medical Discovery' and have often recommended it."

Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, the herbal remedy, which has had such a fine reputation for the past 40 years, is indorsed by many well-known residents of Illinois. Every day more and more people are coming to realize that this is a standard medicine, and is safe to take. It contains no alcohol or narcotics. The ingredients are printed on the package. It is to be had at every drug store in the land in either tablet or liquid form.

Mrs. Luella Sanders, residing at 609 East North St., Jacksonville, Ill., says: "I can say Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is a fine medicine. I had stomach trouble, and having read of what 'Golden Medical Discovery' would do I procured one bottle at the drug store. It helped me at once. I never had any medicine help me as much as this did. When I began using it I had such pain and misery that I could not eat a good meal and sometimes I could not retain food on my stomach. This remedy relieved all the bad feelings and cured me. I have had no return of the trouble. This medicine was the only one I used.

"My mother was a weak woman; she used 'Golden Medical Discovery' and thought very highly of it. It is a 'standby' in the family." —Advertisement.

"Jim Prescott! What are you doing here?"

"Yes," said Jim. "That's who I am, and I'm looking for Tressie. I've hoped she'd come out where I could speak to her, tho I ain't fit. Her dad 'u'd shoot me if I knocked at the door, an' I dunno as I'd blame him. So when I see you—tho I can't guess why on earth you've took to sleeping by a haystack—I thought I'd ask how's my—my wife?"

"If Mart comes nosin' round to see what Bose barked at," rasped Hannah, "we'll likely be shot."

Hastily she outlined the situation. It was perilous in the extreme. When Jim grasped the facts, he forthwith dragged his companion into the roadside barn, whence he had just emerged. Luckily the night and stack screened their movements. Thru the cattle-scented building they hurried, until they gained the tree-bordered highway and were safe. Their haste left Hannah breathless, and her wheezing condition permitted Tressie's wretched husband rapidly to sketch his story

"You folks must think I'm a brute," he guessed. "But I did the only decent thing possible. I hadn't a cent and couldn't get work. Tressie needed her mother. I pretended to abandon her so's she'd go home. It nearly killed me—the deceit—when I'd 'a' died for her. But dying wasn't a square deal. I meant to make good. I tell you it was bucking hell them weeks of job hunting. That and worry 'bout my girl sobered me until I forgot how to smile. Maybe that helped. Luck turned. Right near home, too, when I gave up and was coming to see Tressie. Squire Hampton, on the south line, met me tramping along this way, and asked me a lot o' questions, and ended by offering me a farm. Wants me to stay right along and tend to everything. I'm to have a cottage on the place. Now I want my wife."

"Well, you won't get her," exploded Hannah, with recovered voice. "Jim Prescott, you've been a fool. You've messed up two lives and broke hearts and turned Mart into a murderer—if he has a chance. Now you're afraid to walk up to his door like a man and be told the truth. Tressie ain't there. She hain't been there. When she come begging shelter her father drove her away. It was dark as this and raining. She left neither track nor word. Nobody knows what become of her." She decided not to mention the letters—as yet. "Likely she's dead. Tain't the sort of hurt you can mend, not even by letting Mart have a shot at you, as he surely would if you met. But my advice is take that job and show folks my niece didn't run off with an out-and-out blackguard. It's all you can do."

"My God, my God!" moaned the stricken youth, and crouched, sobbing, by a tree, where Hannah left him.

It was madness to return on guard while Martin McSween sought the disturber of Bose; so she turned in at her own gate and crept into her comfortable bed by Sime.

"Wasn't needed, eh?" said he, rousing a bit.

Anyhow I came home," stated his truthful wife. "But tomorrow I'll stop all night." She said nothing of her encounter with Prescott. Relating that would be telling of her foolhardy vigilance. For a long time she lay thinking of the three men she had left to their fate—Mart, intending to slay his brother; the endangered hill thief who might at that moment be prowling after food; and the anguished young husband who was not, after all, the villain he seemed.

Despite her broken rest, next day she began the autumn house-cleaning. Phil was coerced into lifting carpets and beating them over the line while Hannah scrubbed woodwork and polished windows. She appeared to be absorbed by her task, but her mind was on the evening mail. She wondered what it would bring to Mary, who had made herself a target for human wolves. They would pursue their victim until they tired. No doubt other letters would come with demands for cash. Musing about the matter, she unconsciously watched the carrier, Al Briggs, when he finally delivered mail at Mart's distant gate.

Therefore she saw Mary when she opened a letter and devoured its contents. Not unnaturally surprised when her sister-in-law hastened along the road toward her. But she moved like one crazed by grief. Her head drooped, she tripped and staggered. Hannah waited until Al dropped Sime's daily paper in their own box, speeded up his auto and passed on. Then she helped the almost swooning woman into the front room and seated her. After that, moaning words burst from her bloodless lips.

"Tressie's dead!" she told her sister-in-law. "Read that."

Once more Hannah adjusted spectacles and perused a missive from a stranger. This time the writer claimed to be a morgue official, and stated that the girl described and pictured in a certain daily had been taken from a nearby river and awaited the action of friends. He offered to ship the body home. Conviction of his sincerity was forced upon the reader, but she removed her glasses and attempted cheer.

"Heaps of folks look alike," she insisted. "And blue serge dresses ain't uncommon. Wait a bit and think this over. Anyhow, don't tell Mart till you're sure. Sleep a night on it."

It was the only thing to do. If a mistake had been made, Martin McSween would be furious at his wife for directing public attention to their domestic troubles. The two discussed possibilities of error until Mary roused and spoke of another matter.

"Ed must 'a' been in the coop last night," said she. "The black-and-white pullet's gone. And Mart was watching. It's a mercy there wasn't more bloodshed than a chicken's. What's going to happen next?"

"Anyhow it won't be a killing," comforted Hannah. "Don't fret."

She was more than ever determined to avert disaster. Exactly how this was to be accomplished was not clear. But she would be on the spot ready for emergencies. That night, after the boys settled to slates and lessons, she went forth to meet the fictional Bill Anson, much to Sime's disgust.

"If Anson can't drive all the way, better let 'em tend their own business," he grumbled. "You're wore to a frazzle."

Her appearance belied his statement in her thick flannel wrapper and shawls she bulked huge, and her energetic gait was almost a waddle. At Martin's dwelling, as before, she reconnoitered until sure no one was about. It had become scary work and her nerves were jumpy. Instead of gaining the soft, wind-sheltering stack, she contented herself with the nearer grape arbor at the orchard's edge. Evidently Bose now considered her night visits a regular thing. He welcomed her with moist tongue, and settled his warm body at her side, where he presently slept.

But Hannah's frayed nerves kept her painfully alert. Night sounds startled her into shivering. The air was fine grant with the scent of unharvested fruit. Near by stood a heavily loaded Crawford, and the odor of its ripe peaches dominated on the light breeze. After a while she heard Mart's shed door cautiously open and close. Dull footfalls passed toward huge apple trees, where, as before, the vengeful brother stationed himself to guard his belongings. Hannah shuddered. She regretted not warning Ed when the opportunity was fairly thrust upon her. She quivered with apprehensive fright. Suppose the marauding brother came and she failed to help! Suddenly the significance of the preceding night's events took form. The barking of Bose at the stack diverted Mart's attention while Ed stole the black-and-white pullet. It was a close call. Cold and the thought of it set her trembling. At that moment she became aware that Bose had bounded to his feet and was moving toward the orchard; was whining a dog greeting to some one he knew—and liked. Her heart skipped its beats as she realized it meant but one thing. The outcast brother was near, was about to appropriate something he desired.

"Ed," she shouted, "look out! Mart is going to shoot."

Mingled with her last words volleyed a rifle and sounded a shriek—a feminine shriek! She scrambled upright, shaking with terror; the far gunman crashed down from his vantage point in a tree, Bose was excitedly barking, Mart's shed door burst open and a wavering lantern appeared. It was directed by Mary, who, apprehensive, had with ready lantern sallied forth at sound of the shot

"Here!" Hannah yelled at her. "This way!"

If she was astonished at the voice she gave no sign, but rushed forward until the circular gleam revealed a strange sight. They saw a prostrate girlish form with delicate hands outspread and peaches scattered from her unheeded apron. Her pretty face lay profiled against the dew-wet grass, and her hat had fallen, revealing luxuriant yellow hair.

"Tressie!" shrieked the light bearer, and was on her knees by the lost daughter. Then agony burst into accusation.

"You've killed our girl!" she screamed at Mart, who was at the spot. "You've shot our darling!"

"No, he hasn't," corrected Hannah, who was passing practiced hands over the girl's inert form. "She's just fainted. Here, Mart," she sharply ordered the father, whose belligerence had suddenly departed, leaving him weak as water, "carry her to the house. Quick!"

He summoned strength to obey. His thickset form bent, he lifted his girl with pudgy hands and followed Hannah's lead, while the mother kept close at his side. He placed her, as directed, in the spare bed downstairs; then, humbled and dumb, stepped back, while the women administered restoratives. Presently the blue eyes opened and stared about the familiar room and at the familiar faces.

"You frightened me, Aunt Hannah," was her first amazing speech. "When you yelled at me I must have fainted."

Astonished her into a faint! So she hadn't even heard the gun

"However did you come to be there?" demanded her aunt.

"I was after peaches," confessed the girl. Then she broke into quick-worded explanation

"You see," she began, "the awful night father—drove—me away, it seemed as if Jim and—my folks—and the whole black world was against me. It set me crying terribly, and suddenly Uncle Ed had his arms about me and was calling me 'poor child' and his 'poor dear.' It seems he was—was foraging, and he saw and heard everything and pitied me, and he half carried me to his hut on the hills, because I kept fainting like I did tonight, and next morning I was awful sick. I told him to take me to you, Aunt Hannah, but he's bitter at all the relatives but me. As for me, he cared for me thru that spell of sickness like the old angel he is, and when I got better he wanted me there, and it was so sweet to be petted and so terrible to come down here and be scolded, that I stayed and stayed and——"

She paused for want of breath, and because her mother was telling of her love and despair, and her aunt was chiding her for lack of faith in her friends and commenting on Ed's newly revealed character

"An old angel 'stead of a thief!" exclaimed she. "Think of it!"

"He isn't a thief," defended his niece. "Part of everything's his by right." Evidently her outlaw uncle had converted her to his cause. "So I began to help him get enough to eat, because I knew—where—to—look. And for a week he's been sick, and I've had to wait on him same's he did me, and I must get back!"

So Tressie was the prowler all that week. Her listeners gasped. She anxiously glanced from face to face for permission to leave them, and attempted to sit upright. But she, herself, was ill, so ill that her aunt ordered Martin to the 'phone to summon a doctor. And all night the arriving physician and the capable aunt labored for the precious life—now trebly dear. At times Hannah craftily roused her patient by relating Jim Prescott's strange sacrifice and telling her of the cottage that awaited its mistress.

"Poor Jim!" murmured Tressie. "Poor, silly, penniless boy!" Then she roused to further speech. "If I live to have a home" said she, clearly, "Uncle Ed shall share it."

"That's it, honey," emphasized her aunt. "Remember poor, sick Uncle Ed on the hills waiting for you; and remember your young husband despairing and blaming himself and—live!"

For an eternity the anxious mother hovered at the door beyond which waged the world-old fight against death. And the father, dejected and forever broken in temper, huddled silent and suffering in his chair, until science and the girl's courage won. Then reaction from anguish to supreme joy sent husband and wife into each other's arms, as he

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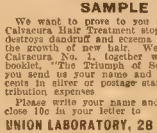

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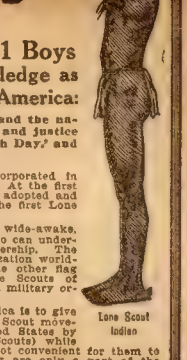

In 88 Weeks 200,841 Boys have taken the following pledge as members of Lone Scouts of America:

"I pledge my allegiance to my flag and the nation for which it stands, with liberty and justice for all. I will 'Do a Useful Thing Each Day,' and be worthy of the name, Lone Scout."

The Lone Scouts of America was incorporated in Washington, District of Columbia, in 1915. At the first meeting of the incorporators, by-laws were adopted and W. D. Boyce was elected Chief Totem. The first Lone Scout took the pledge on October 25, 1915.

1 The Lone Scouts of America is for all wide-awake, ambitious boys everywhere. Any boy who can understand the pledge is eligible to membership. The pledge is so worded as to make the organization world-wide, including any boy living under some other flag than the United States flag. The Lone Scouts of America encourages patriotism, but is not a military organization in any sense.

2 The purpose of the Lone Scouts of America is to give the boys all the advantages of the Boy Scout movement (which was started in the United States by W. D. Boyce, Chief Totem of the Lone Scouts) while permitting them to operate alone if it is not convenient for them to belong to Tribes. Woodcraft and Scouting are only a part of the instructions. The Lone Scout motto is: **"Do a Useful Thing Each Day."** Every boy who lives up to this motto is going to be a successful man.

3 There are no membership dues or fees to pay; no expensive equipment for boys or their parents to buy. The Lone Scouts of America is not a money-making proposition. The organization is supported by the sale of its weekly magazine, "Lone Scout," in which instructions are given the Scouts. "Lone Scout" is sold by news agents for 3 cents a copy. Subscription rates, 25 cents for 3 months, 75 cents a year.

4 As a member progresses in his Scout work he is awarded Degrees with appropriate Badges, and these Degrees make up Lodges. Badges of the first three Degrees (Tepee Lodge) are shown on the left. After the Tepee Lodge comes the Totem Pole Lodge. A member in this Lodge is entitled to put up a Lone Scout Totem Pole, upon which is placed a record of his Degrees.

5 In applying for membership, fill out the Application Blank given below, and send it with 2-cent stamp.

W. D. BOYCE, Chief Totem,
500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

CUT OUT HERE

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

CHIEF TOTEM, 500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Date 1917

I am ready, with consent of my parents or guardian, to take the Lone Scout Pledge, which I have read. Herewith find 2 cents in stamps to pay for mailing Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts of America, First Degree Instructions and Tribe Booklet.

Name..... Age.....

Town..... State .....

St. No., P. O., or R. F. D.....

soothed her with fond words forgotten since their youth.

Sime, again, was lighting the kitchen fire when his portly but haggard wife appeared and gave him an astounding errand.

"Hitch right up," she directed, "and go to Squire Hampton's on the south line. You're to fetch Jim Prescott."

"What for?" demanded Sime.

"Because," Hannah explained, "over to Mart's he's got a wife and son."

"A son!" gasped Sime, and listened, wide-eyed, to the entire story.

"You see," he exulted at the close, "it proves nobody's half bad. What ails 'em is jus' naturally being human."

⁂

Didn't Stay Long.

Her husband had just come home and had his first meeting with the new nurse, who was remarkably pretty.

"She is sensible and scientific, too," urged the fond mother, "and says she will allow no one to kiss baby while she is near."

"No one would want to," replied the husband, "while she is near."

And the nurse was discharged.

⁂

Nearly all the knowledge in the world has been acquired at the expense of somebody's burnt fingers.

Sowing and Reaping.

"I think I shall have a garden," observed the landlady.

"We'll all take a hand in it for you!" enthused the reckless boarder. "Digging's good exercise."

"I can get the seeds for you at school," volunteered the pretty teacher.

"I, for one, will gladly assist in the planting of the seeds," offered the professor.

"I won't," growled the grouch. "I'll dig, I'll weed, I'll do anything but plant. The worst licking I ever got from my old man was for planting beans. For the benefit of those who have never planted beans I'll tell you how it's done ordinarily.

"You have to grovel along in a stooping posture, paying down a bean here and a bean there, and in the course of an hour or so you may have planted a handful of beans and progressed a couple of yards.

"My dad gave me a bucket of beans and pointed out a row a mile long. I took the bucket and planted and planted and planted, and I couldn't see that I had done a thing to the bucket. It seemed to me that the farther apart I put those beans the longer it would take me to get done, so I began planting them close.

"At last a happy thought struck me. I dug a hole and dumped the whole bucket o' beans into it and I was done. Then I endeavored to stand erect, but it was about ten minutes before I could straighten out my back.

"Not long after this, maybe a week or two, I heard a voice saying, 'Come into the garden, Mike!' It was dad's voice, and I went. I had forgotten all about the beans.

"There was a little row of beans stretching a little way and then a long stretch of no beans at all. The spot where the little row of beans ended and the long row of no beans began was marked by a remarkable vegetable phenomenon, right where I had dug my hole and buried my bucket of beans. It was a vegetable pyrotechnic.

"Some of the beans that I had planted in the row hadn't come up at all, but of the beans dumped into the hole every blessed one was growing. Beans grow best dumped in by the bucketful. Say! There was a crowd! It was congestion. There were 896,289 healthy specimens of beanhood in that treelike group. They were an example of 'All for one and one for all' in their unity and strength.

"How did you come to upset a bushel of beans here? And why did you quit planting at this point?' asked my father. Foolish questions, for the answer to which pa never waited! There was a pine board handy and——"

"We won't ask you to plant any beans," interrupted the landlady, hastily.

⁂

The Bullet.

A soldier shot in the fleshy part of the leg was brought in, and the operating surgeon started probing for the bullet. He could not find it; yet, as there was no point of exit, he assumed, quite naturally, that it must still be in the wound, and he probed yet more vigorously.

"Ere, 'old 'ard!" cried Tommy, at last, "Wot yer doin' wiv my leg?"

"Searching for the bullet," answered the surgeon, laconically.

"Well, doctor," replied the wounded man in a quiet, confidential tone of voice, "you won't never find it. 'Cos why? I've got it in me pocket. I wasn't going to run the chance of losing it, so I picked it out wiv me penknife afore I was brought 'ere."

⁂

Why worry about trifles? The hole that lets the water into your shoe will let it out again.

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words; less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO, ILL.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS! BIG MONEY DEMONSTRATING A. P. P. A. Automobile owners eager buyers. Marvelous! Punctures, cuts, blow-outs in tires, tubes permanently repaired in 5 minutes without tools, heat or acids. Self-fusing, self-vulcanizing. 1009% profit. Big repeater. Bilderbrand sells 100 outfits weekly. Sample repair furnished. Act quick. Columbian Chemical Co., Dept. 116, Washington, D. C.

AUTOMOBILE FREE AND BIG COMMISSION given to agents for introducing fast selling summer line of Concentrated Fruit Drinks. New, novel, delicious. Enormous demand. Make $6 to $8 daily. Territory going fast. Write American Products Co., 5754 3d St., Cincinnati, O.

AGENTS BIGGEST WINNER. 11 PIECE toilet article set selling like hot cakes at $1.00 with $1.00 carving set free. Everybody buys. Engle's profit first week $61.00. Great crew proposition. M. Pierce Co., Pierce Bldg., Chicago.

**RUSH POSTAL FOR FREE SAMPLE "SPIC & Span." Wonderful new washing tablet. Washes clothes spotless, without rubbing. Tremendous seller. 200% profit. Free samples to boost sales. Charles Newberry, 209 Peoria, Chicago.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, FURNISHING everything; men and women, $30.00 to $200.00 weekly operating our "New System" Specialty Candy Factories," home anywhere. Opportunity lifetime; booklet free. Z. Ragsdale Co., East Orange, N. J.

AGENTS—$30 A WEEK AND EXPENSES selling window gold sign letters. Anyone can put on. Free samples. Liberal offer to general agents. Metallic Letter Co., 416 N. Clark, Chicago.

PORTRAIT AGENTS SEND FOR OUR large catalog, 16x20 frames 14c up. Portraits at 35c. Samples free. Credit given. Address Friedman Mfg. Co., Box 120, Martinsburg, Mo.

AGENTS—MAKE A DOLLAR AN HOUR. Sell Mendets, a patent patch for instantly mending leaks in all utensils. Sample package free. Collette Mfg. Co., Dept. 707C, Amsterdam, N. Y.

AGENTS—$60 A WEEK TO TRAVEL BY automobile and introduce our 300 candle power coal oil lantern. Write for particulars of our free auto offer. Thomas Co., 811 North St., Dayton, Ohio.

WE START YOU WITHOUT A DOLLAR— Soaps, Extracts, perfumes, toilet goods. Experience unnecessary. Carnation Co., 26 S. Main, st. Louis.

AGENTS — I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff; 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 31, St. Louis, Mo.

NEW MODEL KEROSENE ILLUMINATOR. Proven success. Satisfaction guaranteed. Write, Schubert, 3210 South Halsted, Chicago.

REMNANT STORE, CINCINNATI, OHIO. Greatest dry goods bargains on earth. Agents and store keepers supplied.

HELP WANTED

WAR MEANS THOUSAND MEN—WOMEN, 18 or over, wanted by Government for permanent clerical positions, $100 month. Common education sufficient. Write immediately for list positions. Franklin Institute Dept. E 30, Rochester, N. Y.

HELP WANTED QUICK, MALE AND FE- male $50 to $175 a month without leaving present duties. Nothing for you to sell. New opportunity. Information free. Write immediately, Box 462, Freeport, Illinois.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

WANT A BIGGER JOB? MORE SALARY? Less work? Particulars free. Henry Shaw Dietrich, 44 Boylston St., Boston, Dept. 10.

WANTED—MEN—WOMEN. $75.00 MONTH. List Government jobs open,—free. Franklin Institute, Dep't N-170, Rochester, N. Y.

25c EACH EARNED COLLECTING names. Details for stamp. Unkefer Co., R. A., Baltimore, Md.

EARN $10 TO $20 WEEKLY MAILING LET- ters at home. Outfit-instructions 10c. Jamorrig, 2513 S. 2nd, Philadelphia, Pa.

$35 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. Ursus Company, Dept. A2, Chicago Ill.

MALE HELP WANTED

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS — THOR- ough instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Particulars free. American Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, $ hours, $140. Colored porters wanted everywhere. Experience unnecessary. O886 Ry. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

$20.00 WEEKLY MADE WRITING NAMES for mail order houses. No canvassing. Particulars for stamp. The Guide Company, Memphis, Tennessee.

BECOME DETECTIVES—BIG PAY; EASY work; free particulars. Captain Wagner, 1243 Lexington Ave., New York.

BE A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPOR- tunity. Good pay. Travel. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Wesover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

FIVE BRIGHT, CAPABLE LADIES TO travel, demonstrate and sell dealers. $25 to $50 per week. Railroad fare paid. Goodrich Drug Company, Dept. 85, Omaha, Neb.

$20 WEEKLY; STAMPING PATTERNS AT home. Send stamp. Chicago Silk Mills, Dept M. M., Chicago

SOUTHERN LAND FOR SALE

SOUTHERN FARMERS ARE PROSPEROUS and contented. Favored by nature with mild climate, long growing season and abundant rainfall, fruit, poultry, stock, trucking and general farming succeeds amazingly here. Little Farms in Shenandoah Valley colony of Little Planters $250 and up, complete, on easy payments. Good near-by markets, excellent transportation, low freights. Full information on request. F. H. LaBaume, Agrl. Agt. N & W Ry. 1 N. & W. Bldg., Roanoke, Va.

FARMS WANTED

HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT FOR YOUR farm? Write A. Mohler, Box 453, Chicago.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

FREE FOR SIX MONTHS — MY SPECIAL offer to introduce my magazine, "Investing for Profit." It is worth $10 a copy to any one who has not acquired sufficient money to provide necessities and comforts for self and loved ones. It shows how to become richer quickly and honestly. Investing for Profit is the only progressive financial journal and has the largest circulation in America. It shows how $100 grows to $2,200; write now and I'll send it six months free. H. L. Barber, 433 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago

INVESTORS MAGAZINE FREE TO YOU. $10 invested with us has made others $290.00 in few months. "Hoffman's Investment Journal," tells how this was done. This magazine tells facts about the real earning power of money. Tells how many have started on the road to fortune. We will send it three months free. It is worth $10 a copy to any one who has not acquired sufficient money to provide necessities and comforts for self and loved ones. It shows how to become richer quickly and honestly. Investing for Profit is the only progressive financial journal and has the largest circulation in America. It shows how $100 grows to $2,200; write now and I'll send it six months free. H. L. Barber, 433 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago

INVESTORS MAGAZINE FREE TO YOU. $10 invested with us has made others $290.00 in few months. "Hoffman's Investment Journal," tells how this was done. This magazine tells facts about the real earning power of money. Tells how many have started on the road to fortune. We will send it three months free. It is worth $10 a copy to any one who has not acquired sufficient money to provide necessities and comforts for self and loved ones. It shows how to become richer quickly and honestly. Investing for Profit is the only progressive financial journal and has the largest circulation in America. It shows how $100 grows to $2,200; write now and I'll send it six months free. H. L. Barber, 433 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago

DON'T INVEST IN OIL UNTIL YOU HAVE read the Texas Investor; gives valuable information about rich Texas oil fields; tells how to invest small sums for biggest profits and quick action. 3 months free, together with big oil map of proven and prospective fields. C. C. Cannan, Editor, 657 Chronicle Bldg., Houston, Texas.

$20 BUYS DEED TO LAND, ALSO IN- terest in oil well that should pay you $100 for every dollar invested; payments $2 monthly. Complete information free. Address Texas-Gulf Company, 1105 Union Bank, Houston, Texas.

PATENTS

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. Free actual search and patentability report free. Send sketches and description, or model, of your invention. My patent sales service gets full value. 1917 edition ninety-page patent book free. George P. Kimmel, 260 Barrister Building, Washington, D. C.

WANTED, AN IDEA! WHO CAN THINK of some simple thing to patent? Protect your ideas; they may bring you wealth. Write for "Needed Inventions," "Patent Buyers," and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys, Dept. 174, Washington, D. C.

MONEY IN PATENTS. PATENTS SE- cured or fees returned. Booklets free. Send sketch for free search. E. G. Siggers & Company, U. S. Patent Attorneys, 425 Barrister Bldg., Washington, D. C.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

PROTECTIVE PATENTS PROCURED promptly. 104 pg. Blue Book free. Trademarks registered. Robb & Robb, 248-252 Southern Building, Washington, D. C.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

$25.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY, SMALL CAPITAL starts you. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog free. Atlas Moving Picture Co., Harmon Bldg., Chicago.

$20 TO $50 NIGHTLY. COMPLETE PRO- fessional outfit, machine, film, everything furnished on payment plan. Catalog free. National Moving Picture Co., Dept. B, 537 S. Dearborn St., Chicago.

$50.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY. START WITH small capital. No experience needed. Guaranteed machine. Complete outfits. Write for particulars. Monarch Film Service, Dept. C, 228 Union Ave., Memphis, Tenn.

MOTION PICTURE PLAYS

SEND US YOUR IDEAS FOR PHOTOPLAYS, stories, etc. We accept them in any form—correct free—sell on commission. Big rewards. Make money. Get details now. Writer's Selling Service, Dept. 10, Auburn, N. Y.

OLD COINS WANTED

$2 TO $500 EACH PAID FOR HUNDREDS of coins. Keep all money dated before 1895 and send ten cents for new illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7. It may mean your fortune. Get posted. Clarke Coin Company, Box 70, Le Roy, N. Y.

OLD MAGAZINES, CLOTHES, ETC., WANTED

WE HAVE BUYERS FOR OLD MAGA- zines, books, clocks, clothing, etc. What have you? Golden Rule Exchange Lodge, Inc. St. Louis.

OF INTEREST TO SWIMMERS

AGENTS: SELL "THE WEB SWIMMING Glove." For men, women, children. Guaranteed. Wildfire seller! 100% profit. Samples 25c. Liberal inducements. Territory rights. Web Swimming Co., 441 North Clark, Chicago.

TOBACCO HABIT

TOBACCO HABIT CURED BY HARMLESS recipe. Sent free. Superba Co., FA, Baltimore, Md.

MISCELLANEOUS

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS — SPECIAL rates on finishing during July. Write Floyd Photo Shop, 1103 Madison St., Le Mars, Iowa.

FAKES, HUMBUGS EXPOSED. DETAILS free. Ad. Pub. Co., P. O. Box 496, San Francisco

PERSONAL

TIRED OF POVERTY? IF YOU ARE tired of slaving for wages or salary while others around you are growing rich and independent, if you are tired of poverty and have the ambition that every American ought to have, the determination not to stay poor in this great land of opportunity, the determination to rise above poorly paid toil and social obscurity, write me now, today. Let me tell you of a road to wealth. No work for you to do. Plan backed by best men and women of community. Don't pass this by, it may change your whole life for the better. Tear this advertisement out right now, this minute. Send name and address, and get interesting illustrated book and full information, all absolutely free. Do it right now, for this opportunity won't last. Charles C. Saunders, 309 Denham Building, Denver, Colo.

SUFFERERS FROM NERVOUS, WEAK, run down conditions should take Juvenex Pills. They accomplish marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1, by C. I. Hood Co., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, Lowell, Mass. (2.Fr.)

MEN ON THE DOWN GRADE, REMEMBER we cure varicocele, stricture, chronic, nervous blood, kidney, bladder and private diseases. Book symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Hunt Medical Institute, 22 Washington Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn.

MARRY. YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS ON a postal will bring you full particulars concerning thousand of wealthy and attractive ladies desiring early marriage. Write quick, Sincere Club, B 520, Valley, Nebr.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

MARRY RICH. BE HAPPY AND PROSPER- ous. Big list of descriptions and photos of congenial people with means free. Sealed, confidential. Either sex. Standard Club, Box 607, Grayslake, Ill.

BEAUTIFUL, FASCINATING, ARTISTIC postcards of female beauties; famous American and foreign models; delightfully different. 3 for 10c. Thos. Keith, 500 Rush St., Chicago, Ill.

MARRY — FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

SEND 10C FOR JOHN GEORGE HOHMAN'S instructions, etc., disclosing how one may acquire luck, success and avoid evil influences. P. Waste', Box 131, Montgomery, Ala.

GET ACQUAINTED. LETTERS, CARDS, etc., from everywhere. Members, 10c and 2 pretty cards, 10c. Riverside Xchange, Knoxville, Md.

CATHOLICS WISHING TO MARRY WANT- ing introductions. Booklet free. Catholic Correspondence Club, S D., Grand Rapids, Mich.

MIDGET BIBLE POSTAGE STAMPS, SIZE 2x3, 200 pages, 10c (coin), dozen 75c. J. Jackson, Chattanooga, Tenn

REAL PHOTOS, BATHING GIRLS. STUDIO models, fascinating poses. Sample 10c. Simpson Co., Wheeling, W. Va.

"FROM THE BALL ROOM TO HELL" mailed anywhere, 25c. L. E. Muncy, 136 E. Pleasant Ave., A. Syracuse, N. Y.

GET MARRIED — BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Free for stamp. Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio

GET MARRIED—BIG PAPER WITH ALL names, addresses, descriptions, photos 25c. Wren, 45, Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRY RICH. HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO marry. Descriptions and photos free. B. Unity, Grand Rapids, Mich.

SECRETS, MAGIC, MYSTERY, MIND READ- ing. Send only 20c for this $1 book. Send now. D. Union Book Co., Palatine, Ill.

WANT TO MARRY RICH? IF SO, WRITE to C. A. Rowell, Box 160, Chicago, Ill.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Single subscriptions to the Chicago Ledger by mail $1.00 a year, 50 cents for six months, in advance. Remittances should be made by Bank Draft, Registered Letter, Postoffice or Express Money Order, payable to the Chicago Ledger. The address tab on your paper shows the date to which your subscription is paid.

BACK NUMBERS.

Back numbers of the Ledger promptly mailed. Always give the dates desired, plainly written, accompanied by your full address. Price 5 cents per copy

ADVERTISING RATES.

For Display, $2.50 each Agate Line; for Classified, 30 cents a word, per insertion for circulation of the Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

5,000,000

READERS WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Rosy futures seldom grow on purple pasts.

Good luck is the most popular brand of nerve tonic.

When a man is selfish he shows himself a poor judge of men.

Knowledge of one's ignorance is the master key to wisdom.

Neither industry nor genius is required to make a bad matter worse.

When an army officer smokes cigarettes he is reduced to the ranks.

It's the fellow who wades in shallow water who stirs up the most mud.

Some people half the time are not on speaking terms with their own consciences.

There is more power in kindness than there is in dynamite, but it takes longer to develop it.

Being a weather prophet is most successful among the people with the shortest memories.

A rolling stone gathers no moss; but there are lots of people who don't use moss in their business.

Nothing makes some men feel more important than their ability to answer the questions of a small boy.

Tho the wise man puts his trust in Providence, he doesn't go about hunting holes for Providence to pull him out of.

LEARN THESE

Words Which Have Become Common Usage as Result of the War.

HERE are some of the words which have been brought into daily use as a result of the war, and their definitions:

Terrain—The ground, or earth.

Corps—The largest tactical unit of a large army, and consists of two or more divisions.

Division—Part of an army, and consists of 12,000 or more men, usually about 23,000 in the United States Army.

Squad—Seven private soldiers and a corporal, a non-commissioned officer.

Squadron—Two or more war vessels which form a subdivision of a fleet; in cavalry a company of sixty men or more.

Barrage Fire—Drum fire, or a continuous volley aimed to fall in a certain line to cut off one part of a battlefield from another.

Enfilading Fire—Raking volleys, which are fired lengthwise of an army or trenches.

Sniper—Sharpshooter.

Sapper—Soldier employed in digging trenches or underground passages.

Salient—An angle or elbow in battle line which is open on two sides to attack and usually a position of great importance

Sector—A section of the battle line held by specified troops.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

Pockets continue to be interesting.

Roumanian embroidery is decidedly in favor.

Tunic blouses continue to be great favorites.

Linen and serge in the new corn yellow shade is a fascinating arrangement.

Many of the smart gingham frocks pushing their way into prominence are made with short sleeves.

Wrist puffs add a crisp daintiness to summer frocks of printed voiles. As a rule the puffs are of white organdie and are tied with black velvet ribbon.

The fichu is an important feature of many blouses. Differing from the fichus of a few seasons ago, the fichu starts at the shoulder line, being joined there to the ends of a deep sailor collar. Sometimes the collar and fichu are in one, the collar being extended in front to form the fichu, which crosses in front and fastens at the waist line.

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

To keep light gloves clean rub with fine bread crumbs after each time of wearing.

Bits of ham left over can be minced and used to give flavor and relish to a dish of scrambled eggs.

Soap should never be rubbed on flannels, but a soapy water prepared and the flannels washed in that.

Old window shades, when soaked and boiled clean to take out the dressing, make excellent roller and kitchen towels.

When airing feather pillows do not hang them in the sun, as sunshine "tries" out all the oil from the feathers, making what is known as "dead feathers." Hang in a shady place where there is a light breeze.

Muslin flour bags are excellent for keeping vegetables. Lettuce washed and put inside the bag, then placed on the ice, will keep cool and crisp a long time. Other vegetables, like cabbage, will keep longer than usual if placed in a bag that has been wrung out of cold water and hung in a cool tho not a freezing place

NEEDLEWORK NOTES

Of course, children get loads of fun borrowing a table napkin or a scarf to throw over their play table, but how much happier they would be if you made for them a cover which they could claim as their very own. You could do it in very little time, using a strip of linen sufficiently long and wide enough to fit the table. To make it doubly attractive, outline on it three or four figures taken from the rhyme book. Of course, the cover should be made either white or ecru, so that it may be sent regularly to the laundry without looking any worse for the frequent applications of soap and water.

When the invitation to the "shower" reads something like this, "Please bring something appropriate for the bride's kitchen not costing more than fifty cents," this kitchen sash curtain will be just the thing. It will require two yards of fifteen-cent cheesecloth and two skeins of Dutch blue cotton floss. The sash curtain is made double, with a two-inch hem all around and a sufficient amount of material allowed at the top so that the curtains can be adjusted to any length of window. With the floss are outlined up and down and across the bottom of the curtains small insignia of the kitchen, like a teapot, a steaming double boiler, frying pan, mixing bowl, etc. The outlines for these small designs can be found in the advertisements in the back of any woman's magazine and can be traced with carbon paper.

HEALTH NOTES

Don't read books that irritate you. Books are plentiful. Therefore put away the offending volume and choose another. If a noise at night worries you don't let it continue to do so. Get up and see to the matter and put it right.

When soap and water are employed it is essential that the former perfectly agrees with the skin and this ablution should be permitted but once a day. When the skin is inclined to be too dry or oily, soap should never be used, but prepared almond meal instead. This is sprinkled from the can directly to the cloth, which should be changed at least every other day and thoroly rinsed and aired.

RECIPES.

RICE CROQUETTES—One egg, beaten very light with two teaspoons of sugar and the same of butter. Mix carefully with two cups of cold rice, taking care that there are no lumps. Shape into croquettes by rolling between the two hands well floured, then roll lightly again in flour, and let stand several hours, that they may become perfectly firm. Then fry in very hot lard or drippings. Lay them in a colander and sprinkle with sugar. These are very nice eaten with blackberry or currant jelly.

LEFT-OVER MEAT SCRAPS—One cup cold, chopped lean beef or boiled chicken. Either will do, but chicken is nicer; then add one cup of boiled rice, salt to taste, one tablespoon melted butter. Fry to a nice brown in salt pork after making into small cakes

HOT SLAW—To a quart of finely shredded cabbage add a cup of boiling water, a teaspoon of salt, and cook one-half hour. Then add one-half cup of milk, a teaspoon of butter and cook down until it is quite dry, being careful not to burn. Make a sauce as follows: Beat an egg until frothy, add a tablespoon of vinegar, in which has been dissolved a pinch of mustard, pepper, salt and sugar. Add a tablespoon of butter and set over a kettle to cook until slightly thick, then add one-half cup of boiling milk. Pour over the cabbage, stir together, then serve

RHUBARB TURNOVERS—Make a little good pastry, roll out to thickness of a quarter of an inch. Stamp it out in rounds from four to six inches in diameter, lay upon one-half of the pastry a little young rhubarb, cut small or a little stewed. Add sugar to taste and sprinkle a little powdered ginger over the fruit. Turn pastry over, pinch edges closely together and brush the turnovers with white of egg. Sprinkle a little powdered white sugar over them, bake in tins in a brisk oven about twenty minutes.

AN ICELESS REFRIGERATOR.

Refrigerators can be made to do their part in conserving food this summer. Preserving milk, butter and other suppies and keeping left-overs and unused portions until they are needed will be their service. If ice is not obtainable, an iceless refrigerator, cooled by evaporation, can be easily constructed. Women demonstrators in extension work, South, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture tell how to make such a cooler at a small cost.

This refrigerator consists of a wooden frame covered with Canton flannel, burlap or heavy duck. It is desirable that the frame be screened, altho this is not necessary. Wicks, made of the same material as the covering, resting in a pan of water on top of the cooler, conduct the water over the sides and ends of the pan and allow it to seep down the sides of the box. The evaporation from this moistened covering causes a lower temperature inside. On dry, hot days a temperature of 50 degrees has been known to be obtained in the cooler. This is the way to build it:

Make a screened case 3¼ feet high, with the other dimensions 12 by 15 inches. If a solid top is used, simply place the water pan on this. Otherwise fit the pan closely into the opening of the top frame and support it by 1-inch cleats fastened to the inside of the frame. Place two movable shelves in the frame, 12 to 15 inches apart. Use a biscuit pan 12 by 14 inches on the top to hold the water, and where the refrigerator is to be used indoors have the whole thing standing in a large pan to catch any drip. The pans and case may be painted white, allowed to dry, and then enameled. A covering of white Canton flannel should be made to fit the frame. Have the smooth side out and button the covering on the frame with buggy or automobile curtain hooks and eyes, arranged so that the door may be opened without unfastening these hooks. This can easily be done by putting one row of hooks on the edge of the door near the latch and the other just opposite the opening, with the hem on each side extended far enough to cover the crack at the edge of the door, so as to keep out the warm, outside air and retain the cooled air. This dress or covering will have to be hooked around the top edge also. Two double strips one-half the width of each side should be sewed on the top of each side covering, and allowed to extend over about 2½ or 3 inches in the pan of water. The bottom of the covering should extend into the lower pan.

Place the refrigerator in a shady place where air will circulate around it freely. If buttons and buttonholes are used on the Canton flannel instead of buggy hooks, the cost will be reduced

IN YOUR GARDEN.

You are sure to have a garden this summer if you never had one before. As far as possible every one is obeying Uncle Sam's advice regarding home gardening. Even if the time be full of anxiety the woman gardener does not fail to appreciate the value of being brave-hearted and keeping cheerful for the sake of her health and the happiness of those about her. To aid her the shops are showing most attractive markers which she can stick in her garden patch and in her flower beds, if she has reserved just enough space for a few sweet peas, pansies or other posies. These markers are of wood and each has a hand-painted head indicating the vegetable or flower it marks. For instance, the corn marker has an ear of corn used to trim a hat perched on top of a bright-cheeked maiden. The bean marker has a top shaped like a bean, painted green and given an animated expression by the clever use of dots and dashes. For the four o'clock there is a marker with a clock face. Black figures and hands are painted on a white background. The suggestion might induce the ambitious boy whittler to make some worth while things for his family.

Not So Bad.

Mrs. Exe—"I don't believe that music teacher can make anything out of Katherine's voice."

Exe—"You're mistaken. He's made over a hundred dollars out of it already."

YOUR HEART

Does it Flutter, Palpitate or Skip Beats? Have you Shortness of Breath, Tenderness, Numbness, or Pain in left side, Dizziness, Fainting Spells, Spots before eyes, Sudden Starting in sleep, Nervousness, Hungry or Weak Spells, Oppressed Feeling in chest, Choking Sensation in throat, Painful to lie on left side, Sinking or Smothering Sensation, Difficult Breathing, Heart Dropsy or Swelling of feet or ankles? If you have one or more of the above symptoms, don't fail to use Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets. Not a secret medicine. It is said that one person out of every four has a weak heart. Probably three-fourths of these do not know it, and hundreds wrongfully treat themselves for the Stomach, Lungs, Kidneys or Nerves. Don't take any chances when Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets are within your reach. More than 1000 endorsements furnished.

FREE TREATMENT COUPON

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King's Mountain Boys

Or, Under Liberty's Banner

By Captain Jack Judson

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CHAPTER IX.

SWOOP OF THE NIGHT EAGLES.

A FEW hours intervened between Ethan's encounter with Naomi and his reunion with his companions. The young patriots had worried greatly over their leader's absence. Fearful that Captain Rough would wreak his vengeance on Ethan for the fight at the ford, they were in dire distress, which, of course, vanished at sight of the daring youth. As yet nothing had been heard of Jason, the scout, after his departure for the mountain camp with Master Pidgin, but the boys believed the old man would reappear with important news.

The district had been stripped of nearly every patriot capable of bearing arms against the King. They had flocked to the rendezvous where the mountain men were preparing to swoop down upon Ferguson, who was pushing northward in direction of King's Mountain, where he was to meet his fate.

Ethan told the story of his meeting with Naomi, and assured his friends that he had found an asylum for the disinherited girl, for he had left her at Helen's home. He feared, however, that David Meccam would discover Naomi's hiding-place and deal harshly with her.

On the night after the reunion of the young Whigs, a man dismounted in front of the Tory's house on the hill and entered without knocking. He was soon followed by another rider and yet another, until at least twenty Tories filled the great old-fashioned rooms of the place. David Meccam had sent his servants thru the neighborhood summoning his Tory friends to a conference, for he was desirous of showing the audacious Whigs that he was still a power in the land.

David himself, pacing the floor like a caged lion, with a flushed face, now and then smote the vacant air with his hands as he railed out against the cause of liberty.

"We must crush every Whig in the South!" he exclaimed. "They have given the King no end of trouble, and now they are gathering to strike a blow at Colonel Ferguson. It must not be, I say. They have left a parcel of young ragamuffins led by a boy to harass our rear and carry on a bush war in this region. These young foxes must be trapped. They have waylaid the King's couriers, have deprived them of their dispatches, and caused no end of turmoil."

"What are your plans, Master Meccam?" asked one of the listeners.

David gazed around upon the group and remained silent for a moment.

"If we cannot suppress a few boys, we should renounce our allegiance to King George," he cried. "They have interfered with one of my most faithful servants. They have deprived me of Master Lutz, and have even brought treason to mine own house."

"In what way, friend David?"

"They have filled my daughter's head with rebellion, but tonight she is no longer a member of this household."

"Your own child?"

'My flesh and blood!" almost roared the Tory. "I have sent her out into the world with all she possesses, her riding mare."

The listeners were startled into silence by these words. They looked at each other as if incapable of believing that a father could be so inhuman as to drive his own child from beneath his roof.

"Woe to the house that shelters her!" continued the King's friend. "When she returns she will find the doors of Meccam House barred against her. But let us to the real matter before us."

The visiting Tories had come to the house armed for any emergency. They were men of much courage, and all hated the very name of Whig. Not a few of them had suffered at the hands of the patriots, for the warfare carried on between Whig and Tory had been of the most severe nature.

At the moment of David Meccam's harangue, not far away his daughter was seated with Helen in the latter's home. The two girls were of the same age, but the partisan struggle had forced them apart. Now Helen, in the goodness of her heart, had offered the fair outcast shelter and the warmest friendship.

"I could remain silent no longer," spoke Naomi. "My heart bled for those whom men like Colonel Tarleton and Ferguson have turned out of doors for opinion's sake. I could no longer support King George, and, tho my act has cost me a home, I have not retracted my belief."

"I honor you for your courage," replied Helen. "When the Colonies are free your father will have seen the error of his ways, and the old home will again be your abiding-place."

"I fear you do not know my father," answered Naomi. "He will never relent. He is too well grounded in the royal cause to change his belief. I do not even hope, Helen."

Miss Boyce leaned toward Naomi and tenderly encircled her neck with her arms.

"You will ever find a friend in me, Naomi," she whispered. "My roof will shelter you as long as you wish to remain beneath it. If your father should seek to remove you, I shall stand between you and him, and he will discover that his disinherited child has found a friend whose heart beats, as does yours, Naomi, for the sacred cause of American liberty."

At that moment a low rap sounded on the door, and the two girls sprang to their feet with faces blanched to whiteness by the startling sound.

Helen crossed the room, and with one hand on the iron latch asked who was there.

"It's just Jason," said a voice on the other side of the door.

In an instant Helen swung the door wide, and the tall, angular figure of the old scout presented itself. Everybody knew Jason. He was known as one of the King's enemies, and on more than one occasion he had baffled the Tories in some of their marauding expeditions.

The scout stepped into the light and surveyed the girls with a smile, but Helen noticed that his eyes rested long on the person of her companion.

"Seems to me," said Jason, "there's a new bird in the nest," and his eyes roved to Helen.

"Yes, Jason, and a bird that I intend to shelter," and Helen went over to Naomi and kissed her. "This child has no home she can call her own."

Jason's eyes seemed to enlarge with astonishment.

"I can tell all in a breath," continued Helen. "Naomi has been driven from home because she has a heart in her bosom for those who have felt the iron hand of Tory misrule. She is with our cause, Jason, and we must stand by Naomi."

"Bless me, that we will!" exclaimed the old scout. "If Mistress Meccam needs a friend, it is her child, Jason Moore."

The Tory's daughter disengaged herself from Helen's embraces and held out her hands to Jason. Her eyes swam in a sea of gratitude.

"I'm not quite alone," pursued the scout. "You girls have caused me to forget for a moment that there is some one outside with the horses."

He went to the door as he concluded, and spoke in low tones. The next minute there were soft steps at the threshold, and both girls shrank back as their gaze fell upon the lithe form of a young Indian who stood revealed in the candle light.

"This is Red Fox, the Otari," said Jason, with an introductory gesture. "We are comrades. I ran across Red Fox in the mountain camp. He has lately intercepted one of Ferguson's couriers, and had the good luck to turn over to Colonel Shelby the dispatches he carried. On this occasion, my fair young ladies, Red Fox did not deem it wise to take the courier prisoner, but left him in the forest where he would never again do the King a service."

The young Indian, understanding but little of what Jason had said, drew himself up proudly and remained silent.

"He looks like a good ally, Master Moore," observed Helen, with a little smile.

"Red Fox will show his colors if he ever gets an opportunity," was the reply. "And accordin' to my way of thinkin', the day is not far off when he will be tested."

The last words had scarcely left Jason's lips when Red Fox with a cry bounded to the door and vanished.

"An Indian for hearin' things!" ejaculated Jason, bounding after him.

Red Fox had already reached the horses that had carried them from the mountain rendezvous, and by the light that streamed thru the open door Jason saw more than his young ally.

"Tories!" the silent girls heard him exclaim.

The young Otari was in the doorway again, his hands clutching the slender rifle he carried. He threw one look at his white friend and then turned toward the space before the house. The old scout shut the door and turned the iron key in the old-fashioned lock.

"I guess we're in for a bout with the enemy," he exclaimed, as he glanced around. "They may have followed us, but whoever they be, they will discover that Jason Moore gives in to no Tories."

Outside half a dozen men were seated on their horses, and with savage looks were regarding the patriot home.

"Open, in the King's name!" suddenly rang out a voice replete with sternness.

The tall figure of the old scout seemed to increase in stature.

"We acknowledge no such authority," he replied, and then raising his voice, he struck the door with his clinched fist.

"We open not to the friends of Royal George!" he cried. "Know ye that the only altar in this house is devoted to the cause of freedom."

At this a derisive laugh was heard and Jason's face crimsoned.

"If you will not open we must force the door!" came the reply.

"At your peril if you dare!" was the defiant reply.

Red Fox, toying with his rifle, stood in the middle of the room and centered his gaze on his white friend.

"Come, my men, it's only a Rebel nest, but there seems to be a hawk or two in it tonight," came to the ears of all.

"Hawk or eagle," replied Jason, "you have but to force the door to find talons within this house."

A dead silence followed these words, but it was of brief duration. Something was thrown against the door, and it quivered under the impact.

"Let me speak to the enemy," said Helen Boyce, laying her hand on the old scout's sleeve.

"You, child?" answered Jason, looking down into her face.

"Why not?"

Helen turned the key and presented herself to the men outside.

"Ho, the Rebel bird," laughed the leader of the pack. "But whom have you with you, Mistress Boyce?"

"Friends," replied the girl.

"Which means enemies of the King?"

"As you please, sir."

By this time the horsemen were in arms' reach of the door itself, and all were gazing into the white but fearless face of the patriot's daughter.

"We're willing to let the doves go for the eagles," the man went on.

"The eagles will speak for themselves!" cried the voice of Jason Moore, and that moment the old scout presented himself in the light.

There was a slight recoil on the Tories' part, and their hands sought the weapons they carried on the pommels of their saddles.

"We outnumber you two to one, Master Moore," the leader said, for he had recognized the scout of the mountains. "We did not hope for this good luck, but everything is fish that comes into our nets."

"Be careful that the meshes hold," answered Jason, with a light chuckle. "What is it you want?"

"We want all enemies of the King. Come, surrender without trouble, Master Moore, and we will leave the young misses undisturbed."

"You're wonderfully kind," was the reply. "Doves, as I have discovered, fare poorly at the hands of your ilk. If you outnumber the boy an' me——"

"The boy, is it?" interrupted the Tory Captain. "We have seen no boy, tho we did catch sight of something as we rode up."

"Good night, Jotham Leer," said Jason, as he closed the door. "I haven't had the pleasure of seein' you since I ran you to cover a week since."

The old scout now turned to the two girls and asked:

"What has become of Mistress Boyce?"

"My mother is away," answered Helen. "She will not be back till late in the night, for she is succoring a family farther down the road."

Jason bowed and turned once more to the door.

His strident tones were easily heard by those outside as he lifted his voice.

"Ride down the road, Master Leer, and give the boy an' Jason a show."

"You mean that we shall give you a loose tether?" was the reply. "This can never be, Master Moore. We don't intend to let you slip thru our snare."

"Very well,"

It was the end of the argument, as all knew who heard the old man's words.

"Into your room," Jason commanded, gesturing toward the adjoining apartment. "There's goin' to be some hot work here."

"Nay," responded Helen. "You shall find the Whig's daughter capable of doing her part when Tories menace."

She turned away, and Jason saw her take a rifle from its hooks over the fireplace, her eyes snapping with resistance as she turned to him with the weapon full cock.

Suddenly the report of a firearm was distinctly heard, and a bullet buried itself in the heavy oaken door.

"That's a challenge," came thru the clinched teeth of the old scout. "Surely Master Leer will not try conclusions with us."

Altho Jason knew the caliber of the man who rode by night in the royal service, he did not expect Jotham Leer to proceed to a regular attack. For once, at least, he was deceived.

Another bullet speeding thru the window passed so close to Helen's head that a clipped lock fell at her feet.

"They intend to bite, after all," he smiled, looking at the tress on the floor. Helen stepped aside and watched the old scout in the middle of the room.

"Once more!" called out the voice of Jotham Leer. "In the King's name, surrender."

Silence was the only response to this demand.

If the inmates of the patriot house could have looked beyond the door where the enemy were grouped in the soft light of the stars, they would have discovered that three of the Tories had dismounted, and were poising a long, slender log in their grasp. This battering-ram had been found at the woodpile, and the trio looked at their leader for the command.

Jotham Leer seemed to hesitate. All at once he raised his hand and spoke to his followers.

"At the door!" he exclaimed, and the three men bounded forward with the agility of Greeks.

The stick struck the portal heavily, the door shivered and Jason ground his teeth, and drew back. He knew that the door, tho strong, would not withstand such attacks very long. The wooden hinges were already yielding.

"Once more!" cried out Jotham Leer. "One more blow, my men, and we are in the Rebel nest."

The second blow was delivered with the intensity of the first. The broken lock fell at Jason's feet.

He stepped to one side of the wounded portal while Red Fox took the other.

"Straight into their faces when the door comes in," Jason said to the young Otari. "The candles will give us a good view of the targets. Waste no ammunition, my boy."

Red Fox nodded and straightened for the crisis. The third assault did not come. All at once shots were heard on the outside, and there were cries of maddened men.

"The Rebels!" shouted Jotham Leer. "We are being attacked in the rear!"

A foe whose presence had not been noticed by the Tories was upon them. The marauders sprang to their horses and exchanged shots with the little band which had dashed upon the scene.

"Down with the King's men!" rang out loud and shrill on the night air. "No quarter to the Tories of the mountains!"

Jason heard and threw wide the door. He and Red Fox leaped from the house and saw the scampering Tories, now in haste to get away from the unlooked-for enemy.

The valiant Jotham led all the rest, as he urged his horse up the road, his hat already shot from his head and his followers clashing at his heels. In a moment the whole band was out of sight, at least two of them lying on their horses' necks and groaning from wounds.

"We're just in time, Master Jason!" exclaimed a youth, as he rode to where the old scout stood. "A few minutes more the enemy would have played their trick to a finish."

The speaker was Ethan Byrd, and as he looked down into the old scout's face he laughed aloud.

"We'll let Master Leer go for this time, but he must look out for number one in the future," and then Ethan stared at Red Fox, whom he now saw for the first time.

CHAPTER X.

HO! FOR SHELBY'S CAMP.

THE time was near at hand for the companions of the Liberty League to join the mountain men who were about swoop down upon Colonel Ferguson and teach that British gentleman a lesson.

He had carried on the war in such a savage manner that the whole patriot community had risen up against him. Besides this, the Whigs knew that the overthrow of Ferguson would be a terrible blow to Lord Cornwallis, and perhaps turn the arm of that general from its present purpose. Burgoyne had been captured at Saratoga, and the patriots fondly hoped that the end of Cornwallis was not far off.

The mountaineers were not strong enough to face the well-disciplined forces

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of the haughty Earl, but they believed that they could destroy Ferguson. The bird was almost in their hands and this is why they had flocked from far and near eager for the baiting.

Tory bands like that of Jotham Leer, whom we have seen defeated by Ethan and his little band at Helen's home, had ravaged the country for months. They gave no quarter to the patriots, and their foes seldom gave them mercy in return. Jotham Leer was a coward at heart, but, being of a sneaking disposition, he had kept aloof from the active field of war, preferring to raid unprotected districts where his own life was compacatively safe.

After his dispersion at the mountain home, Ethan and Jason held a little council of war under the trees. The youth exhibited the ring which he had taken from Trooper Malley, Ferguson's courier, and the old scout declared that it should be placed in Colonel Shelby's hands as soon as possible. They did not tamper with the ring, but observed that it had been cleverly made in two pieces, so nicely joined that it was difficult to perceive the union.

When Helen and Naomi had set up an appetizing meal for their rescuers, it was determined that the whole party should join Shelby at once, for Jason, after hearing Ethan's story of his capture and escape, said that Ferguson was nearing an advantageous battleground for the Whigs. The old scout knew the whole country like one knows a well read book, and he declared he believed that the British would halt at King's Mountain, where the battle would be fought.

"It is a strong place," said Ethan, when he had listened to Jason's opinions.

"Yes, lad, but it is the place to fight. Our men will fight him Indian fashion, you know, just as the redskins fought General Braddock in the old war. If we meet Ferguson in the open he will have a chance to cut us down with his dragoons, or charge with the bayonet. In the woods we will have the shelter of the trees, and with the frontier rifle behind each one we'll make it hot for Patrick Ferguson."

"I am glad to hear you speak thus, Jason. If Ferguson is permitted to join Cornwallis the whole country will be at the mercy of the enemy."

"And we shall have Captain Rough and Jotham Leer at our very doors again, to say nothing of the regulars under Tarleton and men of his kind."

"To Shelby, then!" exclaimed Ethan.

"That is the word, boy."

Bidding the two young girls good-by, with the hope that they had seen the last of their Tory foes, the whole band rode away, their faces turned toward the mountain rendezvous miles distant.

Ethan found himself riding alongside of Red Fox, the young Otari. He had readily accepted Jason's recommendation of him. The two youths were of the same age and build. Both were familiar with the country, and, despite their years, were well up in forest craft. In fact, Ethan could follow a trail almost as well as the most skilled redman, and he rather prided himself on this accomplishment.

"How came you to fight against the King?" asked Ethan, as he turned to his companion.

"Red Fox loves the freedom of the forest," was the reply.

"I know that, but your people have made war on the men of the mountains."

"Because the white men have hunted the Otaris," and Ethan saw the dark eyes of Red Fox flash with resentment.

"But you," with a little smile, "you, Red Fox, have turned traitor and joined the Rebels?"

"Red Fox hates a redcoat!" answered the Indian. "Many moons ago one of the King's men stole a deer which Red Fox had hung up in the forest. Red Fox was hungry, and when he went for his game he saw the tracks of the thief on the ground."

"I guess it wouldn't have been good for that redcoat if you had caught him, boy?"

A dark red hand fell lightly upon Ethan's sleeve.

"Red Fox got his deer!" said the Otari, with a meaning look.

"And the soldier?"

"He fights no more for the big chief across the water."

"Served him right!" ejaculated the young Whig. "I take you into full companionship, Red Fox."

He stretched out a hand to the youth, and they rode some distance with their hands joined in a grasp of friendship.

Jason, who rode at the head of the little column, suddenly drew in and turned to his comrades.

"I smell smoke," said he, with a significant shake of his head. "I wonder if some of these pesky Tories are at work tonight?"

A lofty hill rose before the band, and all galloped forward, expecting to solve the mystery of the smoke from its summit.

"Look!" cried the old scout, stretching out his long arm in a northerly direction. "Yes' as I expected."

Far down the valley, which sloped off from the ridge upon which the riders had halted, a lurid light burst upon their vision. The sky was taking on a scarlet hue, and as they gazed the light grew brighter, telling all that some house was being destroyed.

It was enough to send the blood coursing hotly thru every vein. Not a moment was to be lost. The firebugs might be caught at their fiendish work.

"Come!" cried Jason. "Woe to the rascals if we catch them tonight!"

Away went the whole band. Reaching the foot of the hill, they gave their wiry little mountain horses the rein, and urged them on with eager commands.

When they neared the actual scene of the fire several human figures became discernible in the light. All halted and Jason moved cautiously forward to reconnoiter. He was gone a few minutes; then he suddenly reappeared among his anxious friends.

"I can't just make them out," the old man said. "There are half a dozen horses in the trees near the fire."

"Let Red Fox use his eyes," pleaded the young Otari.

"Sartainly," nodded Jason, and the Indian boy leaped from his horse and ran forward.

"What a red kain't make out it's no use lookin' for," observed Jason, taking a pinch of snuff from a little leather snuff pouch. "That boy had the right name. He's a real fox, I tell ye."

The young Indian proceeded some distance; then he dropped to the ground and began to crawl forward. A lot of shrubbery concealed him from the view of those about the burning cabin, and trailing his rifle behind him, he made his way to a spot within a few yards of the scene.

There he lay like a young panther stretched on the ground, his eyes taking in everything before him. Suddenly he sprang back, and, rising to his feet, ran like a deer toward Ethan and his companions.

"What is it, Red Fox?" cried Jason, as the boy made his appearance.

"White men burn cabin," was the reply.

"Jes' as I calkerlated," cried the old borderman. "Whigs ain't burnin' cabins in this locality."

Each member of the little band looked to the priming of his rifle, and all moved forward.

"If we could git between them an' their horses we'd have them in a pooch," Jason said.

"We can try," answered Ethan. "By skirting the woods yonder we will be screened from view, and they can't see us till we are between them and their saddles."

"You're right, lad. You'd make a good general. Now, boys, keep your heads an' don't let the Tories spy you."

It required a good deal of caution to reach the spot chosen for the surprise, but the mountaineers were equal to the task, and presently all dashed forward and dexterously threw themselves between the burning cabin and the tethered steeds.

"Surrender!" rang out the startling voice of Jason Moore, as all turned upon the fire fiends. "Long live Washington and liberty, and down with King George!"

The group of men whose forms were visible about the cabin turned as tho their ears had been saluted by the voice of doom.

"It's no use," continued Jason. "We've got the horses an' we want their riders."

The astonished Tories looked at one another in blank amazement. They had been so cleverly surprised that it seemed as tho their wits had wholly deserted them, and when Jason and his friends dashed forward, the Tories threw down their arms and awaited capture.

"I'm almost sorry they didn't run," said Jason, with a glance at Ethan. "I was jes' achin' to put a bullet in a Tory back, but we've got to treat them as prisoners of war, I guess."

The six King's men were rough-looking fellows who were much downcast at finding themselves prisoners.

"Where's your leader?" demanded Jason.

"We've got none," growled one of the captives.

"Whose house is that?"

The Tories were silent.

"What has become of the inhabitants?"

"The cabin was empty when we reached it."

Just then Red Fox, who had gone some little distance from his horse, came back with a singular expression on his face.

"Tracks of white woman and two children over there," he said, pointing away.

"I thought so!" exclaimed Jason, looking angrily at the silent Tories. "You drove the family out before you fired the cabin. Bring up the horses, Ethan."

Ethan and several of his companions did so, and in a trice the Tories were mounted on their own animals, but the hands of each were bound on his back.

"The family has probably gone to a neighbor's," the old scout observed. "The cabin can't be saved, an' we can't stop here."

A most dejected set of prisoners were now surrounded by the boys of the forest league. Their faces betokened their calling, and as they were taken from the scene of their depredations they looked at one another in silence.

"You got your orders from some one," Ethan said, looking the nearest Tory in the face.

"Do you think so, boy?"

"I know it. They did not come from Captain Rough, for I lately left that worthy in Ferguson's camp, and he hasn't had time to get into this neighborhood to send you out on such a mission as this."

"We don't listen to Captain Rough," was the reply. "We obey a better man."

"Ho!" exclaimed Ethan. "And who, pray, is the better man who commands you to burn the homes of those who love liberty and hate King George?"

"He got us into a bad snap tonight," grinned the Tory. "I hope he will pay for this work of ours."

"We'll see that he is paid," said Ethan, drawing the man on. "If you will name the real criminal it will be to your advantage later on."

The Tory was silent for a minute, and then he leaned toward Ethan till their faces almost touched.

"We got our orders from Davy Meccam," he whispered.

"From the old Tory on the hill?" and Ethan thrilled at the man's information.

The prisoner nodded.

"He shall pay for this night's work, but perhaps not till after we have dealt with Colonel Ferguson."

"You will not betray me?"

"What is your name?"

"Simon Bloss."

"No, Master Bloss, I shall not betray you, but Davy Meccam will never punish you if you are shrewd."

All unbeknown to the watchful Whigs, one of the men had managed by diligent work to loosen his bonds, and presently he spoke to his horse and was off like a train of flashing powder. The dash for liberty was so sudden that the patriots were for an instant thrown completely off their guard. Even old Jason was astounded.

The next moment a wild yell sounded on the night air, and Red Fox was urging his horse after the fugitive.

"Let the boy go," said Jason, waving back Ethan and his little band. "He's got the better horse."

Already the Indian boy and his enemy were out of sight. It was a ride for life on the Tory's part. For some time he did not know by whom he was pursued, but at last, when he looked back and in the brilliant starlight saw the feathers in Red Fox's headdress, his face went pale, and he urged his animal to his greatest speed.

With his teeth firmly set and his eyes aflash, the Otari youth bore down upon his foe. One hand gripped both rifle and rein, leaving the other free and eager to get at the Tory's crop. The ground was open and afforded a fine chase, and the lithe form of the Indian boy, rising and falling on his horse, betokened his native eagerness.

Suddenly Red Fox swerved to the right, for his animal had come up with the quarry, and all at once his hand shot quietly off the Tory's buckskin collar. There was a quick wrench, a cry from the startled man, and Red Fox had thrown him to the ground.

"Mercy!" gasped the fellow, as he looked up pleadingly into the stern face above him.

"Indian have mercy once, mebbe the white men will have none," and with this the young Otari marched his prisoner back at the muzzle of his rifle.

This interesting story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

His Secret.

Smith had mounted three of the steps in the flight leading to the Adams street "L" station when a small package slipped from his hand and dropped into the gutter. Muttering an unavailing word, he turned about and went after it. He stooped down. As he arose, the newsboy who always sold him his afternoon newspaper shouted at him. "Polper, sir! Extra polper!"

"No!" growled Smith, who was usually placid. And immediately he rammed both hands into his trousers pockets.

The newsboy was astounded. "Chee!" he finally piped up as Smith began to climb the stairs again. "I didn't hurt yer, did I?"

"No!" repeated Smith without turning around. His hands still jammed deep in his pockets, he ricocheted from side to side, bumping into other toilers and getting very red in the face. Eventually he faced the cashier inside. He gave a hitch to his trousers and hunted for the nickel. "Here 'yar!" he said, and wormed past the gate.

On the platform he waited. A painful, frightened expression by this time had succeeded the one of annoyance on his face. He stood as if rooted to the spot. He mopped his brow.

The hunted expression was disappearing as he became partially swallowed up in the crowd. When by good luck he found a seat in the smoker, the agony on his countenance evaporated entirely. During the twenty-minute ride he conversed freely with Hicks, a friend. Any observer would have held that his anguish had been forgotten forever.

But when the train stopped at University avenue it was evident that Smith's trouble broke out anew. As he rose from his seat, a sudden paroxysm caught him. He swayed, grabbed the strap in front of him, then rammed both hands into his pockets and pressed them to his sides.

"'Smatter, grandpa?" asked Hicks. "Rheumatism? Peritonitis? Lumbago?"

"Nope!" said Smith with a ghastly smile. "But thank you for trying to help me all you can!"

"Guess you'd better take a little ipecac when you get home, Smithy!" he said. "Or get a doctor to examine you. You look bad!"

Smith stumbled up to his flat.

His wife met him at the door.

"Why, Jacob!" she screamed as he hobbled in, his hands in his pockets pressing his sides. "What in the world is the matter?" "Plenty!" said Smith. He threw off his coat and vest. Mrs. Smith immediately diagnosed appendicitis and attempted to walk to the medicine chest and to the kitchen for a hot flatiron at one and the same moment. Her husband's vibrant voice prevented a catastrophe.

"See where those suspender buttons busted off," he was saying. "And all on account of that inconsequential package of needles and thread you wanted."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said Mrs. Smith.

* * *

Just So.

Election time was drawing near and an enthusiastic politician was addressing his constituents in a frenzied speech. Not a few of his assertions, reduced to cold thought, were diametrically opposed to one another, but each proposal was received with applause. A judge turned to his companion and said: "This reminds me of the Irish leader who was cheering his men on to battle. 'Min,' said he, 'ye are on the verge of battle an' I want to ask ye before ye start, will yez fight or will yez run?'

"'We will,' came a chorus of eager replies.

"'Which will ye do?' said he.

"'We will not, says they.

"'Aha, thank ye, me min!' says he, 'I thought ye would.'"

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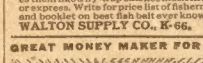

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STORYETTES

IMPOLITE BY CHOICE.

At an East Cleveland women's club, where the ladies are now spending their time knitting socks for soldiers, this was overheard and relayed by one of the knitresses.

"Would you think," asked a club member, "that my husband and I would be taken for bride and groom when we make a little trip?"

"Why, of course you might, dear!" answered two or three. "You neither one of you show your age, and——"

"Thank you for your politeness," went on the lady, "but I wasn't fishing for anything like that. I was merely introducing a topic. When we were married—sixteen years ago next month—we figured out a way to deceive the train people and the hotel people and the strangers. I carried a big grip, of which my husband never attempted to relieve me; and he read the morning paper at breakfast. This ruse we continued during our entire honeymoon."

"Was it successful?"

"Oh, yes—fairly so. But that isn't the question. The next trip we made—it was a year later—my husband was still afraid that we might be taken for bride and groom.

"Again I carried the baggage, and again he ignored me in favor of his newspaper, at the breakfast table. I didn't enter into the spirit of the thing quite so readily on that occasion.

"But the custom had been established. We went to New York last week—and I carried the hand baggage. When I protested, my husband said, 'What's the matter—do you want people to mistake us for a honeymoon couple?'

"What I want to know is this: How old do we have to be before it will be safe for my husband to begin to be polite to me?"

JUST HIS LUCK.

The lady bather had got into a hole and she couldn't swim. Nor could the young man on the end of the pier; but when she came up for the first time and he caught sight of her face, he could shriek, and he did. He shrieked:

"Help!"

A burly fisherman sauntered to his side.

"Wot's up?" he asked.

"There!" hoarsely cried the young man. "My wife! Drowning! I can't swim! A hundred dollars for you if you can save her!"

In a moment the burly fisherman was in the sea. In another he was out of it, with the rescued lady bather. Thanking his lucky stars, he approached the young man again.

"Well, what about the hundred bones?" he asked.

But if the young man's face had been ashen gray before now it was dead white, as he gazed upon the features of the recovering dame.

"Y-e-s, I know!" he gasped. "But when I made the offer I thought it was my wife who was drowning, and now—now it turns out it was my wife's mother!"

The burly fisherman pulled a long face. "Just my luck!" he muttered, thrusting his hand into his trousers pocket. "How much do I owe you?"

A STALE ONE.

Some workmen on an ostrich farm in South Africa one day found a live shell left by some artillerymen who had been at target practice on the plains a few days before. Not knowing it was loaded, they whitewashed it and placed it in an ostrich's nest, thinking to play a joke upon the boss.

The next morning one of the hands came around to look for eggs, and, finding, as he thought, a large one, seized on it at once.

In his astonishment at finding it so heavy he dropped it, with the result that it exploded with direful effect. The man was hurled several yards away, but, strangely enough, beyond lying stunned for a few minutes, he was unhurt.

"Whew, boys!" he murmured, when he recovered his speech, "that egg was the stalest I ever ran across!"

WHAT HE WANTED.

He was a smart young soldier boy, and as he took his seat in the tea shop he smiled affably at the waitress and remarked:

"Nice day today!"

But the waitress had been reading what had been said of the tricks our soldiers played, and she meant to keep all temptation at arm's length.

"Yes, it is," she replied, "and so was yesterday, and my name's Flossie, and I know I have pretty blue eyes, and I've been here for two weeks and like my job, and I don't think I'm too nice a girl to be working in a tea shop, my wages are satisfactory, and I don't want to go to a theater tonight, and I won't go with you if you ask me; I don't live at home with my mother, and my brother is the cook in this place and a former lightweight champion. Now, what'll you have?"

"I guess I'll have less chin music, some food and more politeness!" said the soldier boy, and he reached for his hat and departed.

GREAT UNDERSTANDING.

As he carefully varnished his hair, he rehearsed his speech to "dear papa:"

"Sir, I have called to tell you, quite frankly, that your daughter Euphemia and I love one another and to ask for your consent to our marriage. I am not a rich man, I own, but we are both young and strong, and willing to fight the battle of life together," and so on.

It was not until he faced papa alone that his collar grew suddenly tight and his eyesight failed. He took a deep breath and plunged:

"Sir, I er—ahem—I frankly come to—er—um—er—tell you, quite frankly, that you love—that we—that is, that I love your daughter—ahem! I—ah—have frankly called to—er—ask you to—er—er—be my wife—that is—er—she—we—er—I—no, we are young and—er—will fight. I—ah—hope, sir, you understand."

And father did. That's the wonderful part of it.

THEIR EXPLANATION.

They were two weary travelers, and they had found a stray dog. She was a dear old lady, and her dog had been stolen. Consequently she had offered £2 reward to whosoever should return her lost doggie, and so Beery Billie and Fusty Fred determined to return the stray dog and claim the reward.

"'Ere 'e is, mum, the little darlint; and 'is grief at 'aving been parted from you was hawful," said William. "Kep' us awake all larst night, 'e did, a-whining and going on something 'eartbreaking."

"But my dog was not so big as that one," said the lady.

"Ah, but 'is 'eart's swelled with grief and 'orror at bein' parted from 'is kind mistress."

"And my dog was black; not that pale color."

"Oh, mum, 'is 'air turned white with the shock durin' the night," said Willie. "Didn't we see it turning, Frederick?"

But such is the flintheartedness of human nature that the old lady refused to believe him even then!

HE SAW TWO.

He was a convivial old soul, and in the small country village he missed the delights of town.

So he consoled himself at the village inn, and next morning he was up before the local j. p. at the neighboring town.

"The constable," observed the city man to the magistrate, "seems wonderfully certain about the details of my case. How is it he doesn't call his fellow officer to corroborate what he says?"

"There's only one constable in Peddleford," explained the magistrate.

"But I saw two last night," indignantly asserted the accused.

"Exactly," said the magistrate, smiling broadly. "That's just the charge against you!"

BOTH WAYS.

The late Judge Pennypacker of Philadelphia was an advocate of the enfranchisement of women, but he also advocated justice in the relationship between the sexes for man.

"Woman," he said, whimsically, one day at the Pennsylvania Historical Society, "mustn't play it both ways. She mustn't get the vote and the equal wage thru man's sense of equity and then get all kinds of unfair privileges thru his sense of gallantry.

"There's a lot of truth in the story of the young broker who, after his failure, was thrown over by a pretty girl.

"'Why was the engagement broken off?' a banker asked the ruined broker.

"'Well,' he answered, 'after I'd given her a string of pearls, an opera box and a birthday gift of a twelve cylinder limousine, I went to smash, and her people accused me of amusing myself at her expense.'"

THE FIRST BLOW.

A rather good story was told the other day by a certain army veterinary surgeon home on short leave.

It appears that a recruit applied to him one morning for a prescription for his mount, which was ailing.

Two hours afterward the recruit ran into the vet's little office with a face as white as chalk. "Oh, doctor, I am bad; the powder's nearly killed me!"

"The powder?" asked the doctor, "Why, didn't I tell you to place it in a tube and put one end in the horse's mouth and then blow hard? I didn't tell you to take it!"

"Well, doctor," replied the victim, "I did put the powder in the tube, and then placed one end in its mouth and one in mine."

"Well?"

"The blooming horse blowed first, sir!"

Auto Grouch—"How's that for a hog—won't even stop and chuck the gent he runs over out of the way—leaves it for us to do."

ALL SUPPOSITION.

One battalion of the local Territorials had challenged another to a sham fight.

The defenders took possession of a magnificent position on a cinder heap overlooking the six-foot-wide river. To make themselves secure, they "blew up" the only bridge, by simply posting up a notice to say they had done so.

Imagine, then, their indignation when they saw the enemy calmly crossing the bridge, every man holding his rifle high over his head.

"Here, I say, you know!" called out the captain of the defenders, angrily, "you can't cross that bridge! Can't you see it's supposed to be blown up?"

"That's all right," replied the attacking sergeant, calmly. "We're not crossing the bridge. Can't you see we're supposed to be swimming?"

THE COMPOSER.

Most people know that the Kaiser dabbles in various arts, music being one. During a holiday spent aboard his yacht he often kept a band playing. One day as the Emperor was listening to it, he suddenly turned to one of the officers near, and said: "What execrable music! Whatever made them choose such a piece? Would you go and find out the composer's name?

"Well," the Kaiser continued, as the officer returned, "who wrote it?"

"Sire," the man stammered, as he held out a copy of the piece, "it is one you composed yourself."

HIS CRITICISM.

A colonel in the French army who had a great eye for neatness, but not much of an ear for music, took occasion one day to compliment his bandmaster on the appearance of his men. "Their uniforms are neat," said the colonel, "and their instruments are nicely polished and kept in order, but there is one improvement that I must insist upon."

"What is it, Colonel?"

"You must train your men, when they perform, to lift their fingers all at exactly the same moment, and at regular intervals on their instruments, so—one, two; one, two!"

THE END OF THE LESSON.

The young teacher was proud of her little pupils, and beamed with pleasure at the appreciation shown by some visitors, who applauded generously. Then came the lesson, and the teacher announced the subject.

"Children," she said, "today we are going to learn about the cat, and I want you to tell me what you know about it. Tommy, how many legs has a cat?"

"Four," replied Tommy, proudly conscious of rectitude.

"Yes; and, Daisy, what else has the cat?"

"Claws an' tail," murmured Daisy, shyly.

Various other portions of the feline anatomy were ascertained, and finally the instructress turned to one of the latest acquisitions of the kindergarten, and said, sweetly:

"Now, Mary, can you tell me whether the cat has fur or feathers?"

With scorn and contempt mingled with a vast surprise, Mary said:

"Teacher, ain't you never seen a cat?"

And the lesson came to an abrupt end.

ALL EXPLAINED.

Before he attained to the front rank in his profession, Fred Kitchen, the famous comedian, used to tour Europe in an acrobatic turn with a partner named Royal.

One week they were at the Eldorado Theater, Naples, and after the performance they went for a stroll along the famous embankment, known as the Waterfront.

"Pretty soon," says Fred, in telling the story, "we reached a statue, and, lo! it nodded gravely toward us.

"'Did you see the statue nod?' said my partner.

"'I certainly did,' said I.

"Well," said he, 'I'm going back to the hotel and to bed before I get run in. It's that confounded Capri wine.'

"So, ashamed of ourselves, back we went, and sneaked up to bed.

"But at breakfast the next morning both of us seemed to be amazingly fresh, considering our dissipation of the night before, and we could not understand why we had such good appetites until the waiter said:

"'Did the gentlemen feel last night's slight earthquake?'"

ONE THING NEW.

A certain city gentleman, who was very well known by porters of a small railway station not many miles from London, was one morning waiting for his usual train, and, observing a porter coming toward him, said:

"Ah, good morning, John! Anything fresh this morning?"

"No, sir," said the porter with a smile, "only the paint you are leaning against."

HOW IT WAS.

Old Roxley—"So Prince Picayunski says he is the heir apparent. How is that when he is the youngest son?"

Miss Roxley—"Oh, he explained that. His brother is the heir consumptive."

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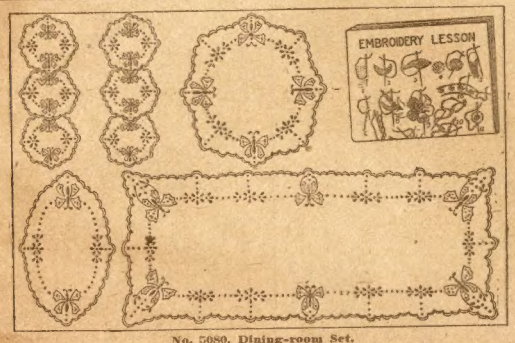

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No. 2005, Baby's Kimono.

* * *

The Net Result.

Samuel Grindstone was a hustler of the modern school. He believed in the gospel of speeding up. Over every desk in his office he placed a large printed notice reading: "Do it now!"

But a week later, with tired fingers and an exhausted air, he tore them all down.

"Hallo!" said a friend, dashing in on the ceremony of destruction. "What's up? Doesn't hustling pay? Going back to the old, leisurely methods?"

"Yes, I am," snorted Grindstone. "Hustling doesn't pay. I gave sixpence each for these notices, thinking they'd spur my staff on to hard work."

"Well?"

"Well, the net result is that they've all acted on the motto. The chief cashier has bolted with the contents of the safe, my typist has eloped with my youngest son, four juniors came in yesterday to ask for a raise, and the office boy has found a better job and gone off to it."

* * *

A Thoughtful Wife.

The young physician was tired, but, as he settled back in his easy chair, and his newly wedded wife took a seat beside him, he asked, affectionately:

"And has my little wife been lonely?"

"Oh, no," she said, animatedly; "at least, not very. I've found something to busy myself with."

"Indeed!" he said. "What is it?"

"Oh, I'm organizing a class. A lot of young girls and married women are in it, and we're teaching each other how to cook."

"What do you do with the things you cook?"

"We send them to the neighbors."

"Dear little woman," said he, "always thoughtful of your husband's practice."

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Sinks when all his work is done.

DEMOS AND WAR GOD

A little shepherd lad guarded his sheep on a long plain which lay to the southwest of Constantinople. He shaded his eyes with his hands the better to see the long line of horsemen growing every instant more distinct against the skyline, and presently there came to him the horror-stricken cry of the shepherds thereabouts, who fled in a mob from the neighborhood.

"Save us! Save us!" rang their cry, "from the wrath of Attila the Hun, the scourge of God."

For a moment the shepherd lad looked serious, but he made no move to flee away as did the rest. Instead, he went and stood over a dagger thrust into the earth just under a tree. Vaguely he wondered whether this was a sign which the war god had sent. He crouched behind the bushes when the army of the invader had come very near, and watched them put up their tents. One he noticed was larger than the rest and made of cloth of gold. This, he knew instinctively, belonged to Attila, the commander. Quite content, he watched the busy camp from the bushes until the quiet stars came out in the skies and a wisp of moonshine glimmered and glowed on the hilt of the dagger.

Fascinated, he watched, until presently the dagger moved and, sliding over in his direction, touched his naked hand.

At once the boy lost all doubt.

He had received an order direct from the war god—he would obey.

Quietly he stole back to his tiny ramshackle shelter, gathered together his few personal belongings and, taking the dagger almost reverently in his hand, started stealthily toward the cloth-of-gold tent that gleamed and glowed in the moonlight.

Presently he had attained the doorway and, eluding the guard, had slipped inside. Here amid the strangeness of the queer Eastern habits and furnishings he could not see very well for a time, but at the end of a few moments his eyes accustomed themselves to the light, and he gazed about him in amazement. Embroidered cushions and low, luxurious couches, silken drapings of all sorts, held him speechless with admiration, until he started back in horror at sight of a twisted figure which suddenly rose up before him as from thin air. Misshapen in every part, with a huge head and spindling feet, a dwarf stood before the shepherd boy.

"What do you here?" asked the dwarf, and the lad looking into his eyes saw that they at least were clear and straightforward, evenly friendly.

"I come with a sign from the war god," said the shepherd, simply.

The dwarf uttered an exclamation that was like a sibilant hissing between one's teeth, and yet must have been a word.

"Come hither," he said, beckoning, and the lad followed on.

In an inner room of the tent they came upon Attila, lying huge, fierce, awe-inspiring, upon a mound of fresh-cut boughs, which contrasted oddly with the otherwise gorgeous appointments of the place. The quick eyes of the shepherd lad saw that he had thrown aside all war gear, and was lying loosely clad, resting.

To the boy's amazement, the dwarf stood upon no terms of ceremony with the mighty and awful being upon the boughs. He gave a flying leap from the door and landed directly at Attila's shoulder, from which position he spoke of finding the lad. Attila's huge hand caressed the dwarf while he spoke. He sat up when the dwarf had told him the shepherd boy's errand.

In a few short sentences the shepherd lad told of his finding the dagger and the message it conveyed.

Attila seized it from his hand and, holding it aloft, swore roundly to sweep Europe. The lad, frightened, would have slipped away, but Attila would not allow it, attaching him personally to his suite and commanding the dwarf to fit him out at once with proper court clothes. Within an hour Demos had returned to the Ravager's presence, clad in a silken robe and with his senses bewildered by the change in his condition. But it did not drive away healthy slumber from the lad, who slept soundly all night long.

Early next day messengers rode up to the camp from Genseric the Vandal, ruler of Africa, asking Attila to invade Europe for the purpose of punishing Aetius, Emperor of the West.

Now, Demos and Jovan, the dwarf, put not their trust in the messengers, and so in disguise they spied and found out that Theodosius, Emperor of the East, had sent a large army against Genseric the Vandal.

As soon as Attila heard this he dispatched his counselor Edecon to Constantinople, while he with his Huns moved northward, laying waste the cities and towns and villages thru which they passed.

At last seventy blooming towns were swept from the face of the earth, and Edecon appeared for Attila before Theodosius and demanded the instant recall of the troops sent to Africa against Genseric. The Emperor, fearing the awful power of the scourge of God, was forced to submit to his request.

Attila meantime was camped in a pleasant valley, upon which looked down the bold, dark faces of high surrounding mountains. He was more than comfortable, for he had seized for his own use one of the palaces of Theodosius, built thruout of teakwood and bamboo.

At length came the day for Edecon's return from the court.

"What makes you so restless, Jovan?" asked Demos.

"I know not exactly," replied the dwarf, "but I fear all is not well with Edecon," and he would say no more. But as the shadows lengthened out and still no sign of the returning emissary was visible, Demos and the dwarf sought out Attila.

The two were privileged, and so, altho the guards knew that the King slept, they were allowed to pass. They found the huge Hun lying in unconscious slumber upon the floor of his room. Very quietly they concealed themselves and waited.

It was a long and weary wait before the guard peered in and then admitted a man. In appearance he was Edecon, but the two concealed were suspicious. He smiled slowly as he slipped his hand close to his side and edged toward the sleeping Hun. Swiftly he bent over, but not so swiftly as Demos flew from behind the curtain and knocked the dagger from his hand or the dwarf shrilled for help. On the instant Attila was up and in action. To the surprise of all, he saved the impostor from execution, and when the real Edecon came back to camp

Bug Fire Chief—"Boob! Turn on that water!"

he sent the impostor back to his king with a scornful message.

For weeks and weeks the army camped in the mountain, guarding the passes, and planned to take Constantinople.

The Emperor Theodosius died and Marcian ruled in his stead, but still the Huns lingered, and every day found Demos improved in his knowledge of war and fighting under the skilful tuition of the dwarf, who, altho in no wise able to take upon himself any burden, knew the science of war to a nicety.

Inaction palled upon Attila after a time, and he accepted Genseric's invitation to invade western Europe. Once more the air rang to Attila's battle cry as he and his horde pressed down thru the dark forest-clad North into Gaul.

Not long after he had crossed the Rhine, the scourge of God surrounded Chalons, and his fierce heart was full of joy at the prospect of subduing the city and laying it low, when a sudden alarm swept thru the ranks. Emperor Aetius, with the support of the arms of Europe, had arrived to the attack.

In the mighty battle which followed, Demos was never absent from Attila's side. Thru the thickest of the fight he rode like a whirlwind gone mad, with all his fierce love for the master who had befriended him directing his blows.

But the shock was too much for Attila's army and a retreat was begun, despite all he could do.

The followers of the scourge of God everywhere snatched off their saddles and built a great pile, upon the top of which stood Jovan, motionless and sorrowful. Demos stood at the foot, in his hand a lighted torch, ready at a moment's warning to set the pile ablaze.

Presently, like a maniac, Attila dashed into camp, the yelling horde of Gauls, Franks, Romans and Goths at his heels.

He gave a glance to where Jovan stood, a solitary, pathetic figure, with misshapen, beckoning arm held out, and with one leap he stood beside the little figure, while all the army of the enemy stood gazing at the strange sight, and Demos stood ready at the first sign of hostility to fire the heap rather than let his king fall into their hands.

It is a small wonder that Attila was allowed to escape unharmed into Germany.

A year later, when Attila lay dead beside the Danube, Jovan lay at his feet, in his faithful heart the wound of the dagger which had been found by Demos, plunged by his own misshapen hand.

CHINESE TELEPHONING.

There is a telephone exchange in Chinatown, San Francisco, that is unlike any other in the world. In the first place, it is housed in a bit of richly carved and highly colored architecture that "looks like a picture press fan"—so says a writer in St. Nicholas, or like a bit of old Pekin set down in a modern city. When the visitor enters he is received by a man in rich Chinese garb, but an up-to-date business man, and quite American in everything but his race and costume. He is an expert electrician and he has charge of the exchange which serves all the Chinese customers in the city and its suburbs. There are about a thousand telephones in the Chinese quarter, and calls up to 8,000 in number are handled every day by the dainty little Oriental girls who sit at their work in the costumes of their own people. These girls have, in addition to a perfect knowledge of English, a command of the different Chinese dialects that are spoken in the quarter. More wonderful than that, however, is the fact that these "centrals" must remember the name and number of all subscribers, since the Oriental does not call by number.

A PREDICAMENT.

A man took his children to a county fair. As they moved about the grounds the father felt his fifth born tugging at his coattails. He turned, and the youngster begged him to buy some candy.

"Buy it yourself," said the father. "Where's the dime I gave you a little while ago?"

"It's down my neck."

"Well, shake it out!"

"But, dad, I can't. It was in my mouth when it went down."

WHAT IT WAS.

The small boy was the first to answer the telephone. The person on the other end of the wire was a friend of his mother, and the following conversation ensued:

"Is this Mrs. Blank's residence?"

"No, ma'am, it's Mrs. Blank's little boy."

DIDN'T LIKE IT.

"Mamma, I want a dark breakfast."

"Dark breakfast! What do you mean, child?"

"Why, last night you told Mary to give me a light supper and I didn't like it."

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